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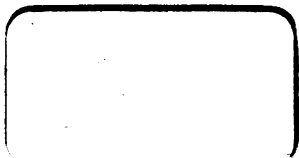


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**THE
FARM BUREAU MOVEMENT**



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JAMES R. HOWARD
First President of the American Farm Bureau Federation

THE FARM BUREAU MOVEMENT

1

BY

ORVILLE MERTON KILE, B.Sc.

Formerly Assistant Washington Representative of the American Farm Bureau Federation, and Ex-Secretary of The Farmers Marketing Committee of Seventeen

WITH INTRODUCTION BY

JAMES RALEY HOWARD

President of The American Farm Bureau Federation



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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

The pages which follow are written with a two-fold object in view. First; to give to those non-agricultural groups who may have either a business, political or social interest in the Farm Bureau Movement, a better understanding of its background, origin, structure and purposes, and, second; to present to farm bureau members and officers a systematic study of the underlying forces of which the present Farm Bureau Movement is a resultant, and an analysis—comparative rather than abstract—of the strengths and weaknesses of the organization, in order that they may the more intelligently avoid the mistakes which have wrought the ruin of other highly promising agricultural organizations.

The author's belief in the possibilities of the Farm Bureau Movement for good, is supreme and his enthusiasm is tempered only by his observation of the ease and regularity with which farmers' organizations of the past have speedily arrived at a state of somnolence and inaction after a brief period of promising, albeit somewhat feverish, activity. It is the hope of the author that by tracing, classifying, and labeling the ills to which farm organizations seem peculiarly prone, their symptoms may be more readily recognized by the membership when they appear in the Farm Bureau and remedies applied in time to avoid the serious consequences which ordinarily follow.

In pointing out lessons and drawing conclusions it has been the constant endeavor to avoid merely arbitrary

expressions of the author's personal convictions. Only those deductions and suggestions are made which may be fairly inferred from the experiences of other organizations in similar situations. Prophecy is indulged in only to the extent that results of a given set of conditions or tendencies may be projected into the future in the light of the experiences of similar organizations under similar circumstances.

The hope is also entertained that a careful reading of these pages by a considerable number from the non-agricultural classes may prove of material assistance in overcoming the feeling of opposition too often held toward all organized agrarian movements. An attempt is made to present the fact that such an organization developing along economic lines may be—in fact, should be—extremely beneficial to the vast majority of urban dwellers.

This is not, primarily, a history of the Farm Bureau, but in an effort to present a picture of the true status of agricultural organization to-day and to compare the Farm Bureau with former as well as contemporary organizations, much of a purely historical nature has been included. Historical data and local atmosphere have, however, been made incidental to the delineation of principles.

The author's connection with agricultural extension, and organization work for the past ten years has given him first-hand access to much of the material required in a book of this kind, but he desires particularly to thank the officers of the various State Farm Bureaus, as well as of the American Farm Bureau Federation, for their courtesy in making available such records and information as were requested. Valuable information and data were also furnished by Dr. T. C. Atkeson, of the National Grange,

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

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Charles Lyman, of the National Board of Farm Organizations, George P. Hampton, of the Farmers' National Council, and Senator E. F. Ladd.

Special acknowledgments are due President J. R. Howard for the introductory pages which serve their purpose so well; to Samuel R. Guard for criticisms and editorial suggestions in the preparation of portions of the manuscript; to Dr. C. J. Galpin, of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, for access to unpublished manuscripts; and to J. Clyde Marquis, Gray Silver and R. F. Bower for careful reading and valuable criticism of the entire manuscript in advance of publication.

O. M. KILE.

Washington, D. C.,

August 5, 1921.

INTRODUCTION

Any organization which attains a paid membership of more than a million in the first year of its existence, which operates in forty states, and has individual state units spending budgets of a quarter million dollars or more annually, must have had either extraordinary organizing abilities or extraordinary opportunity, or must have been actuated by a motive and purpose deeply rooted and most potent.

Since the organization under discussion is made up entirely of farmers, no special organizing skill or experience can be claimed. The favorable opportunity existed, without doubt. But it is safe to say that the deep-rooted and powerful purpose and motive back of the American Farm Bureau Federation, which in one form or another has manifested itself in agricultural affairs throughout the past fifty years, is the real cause of the rapid growth and present powerful position of this new spokesman for the farmer.

And it is precisely because of the depth and tenacity of this feeling on the part of the farmer, and the further fact that the two or three million leading farmers are in position to control the opinions and expressions of the entire rural population—which with its urban dependents makes up nearly one-half of the population of the United States—that this farm bureau movement well merits the most careful thought and attention, both on the part of its membership and officers and on the part of the general public whose interests it must inevitably affect.

The possibilities for good are so great, along economic as well as social and civic lines, and the opportunities for disaster so plentiful, that no true student of the trend of the times can fail to view the development with extreme interest.

The consumer is apparently torn between the hope that organized agriculture will mean more economical marketing, and the fear that it may mean food monopoly with resulting high prices. The manufacturer and the merchant are wondering whether the movement means for them bigger markets or restricted activity. The politician is frankly alarmed at what he calls the solidarity of voting strength, which he sees looming ahead.

Agriculture cannot set itself up as something independent and apart. In our modern state of complexity agriculture is as dependent upon the city as the city is upon the country. If organized agriculture acts wisely and sanely there will be no cause for alarm on the part of the consumer, the business man, or even the honest straight-forward politician. Strife comes usually through misunderstanding. The success of the farmers' movement in fitting itself into the social and economic structure smoothly and with mutually beneficial results, depends upon a thorough understanding on the part of the urban public of its motives and purposes.

On the other hand those within the organization who earnestly desire its permanent success and development, can profit greatly by a study of the successes and failures of the agrarian organizations that have gone before. The costly mistakes of the Grange, the Alliance, the Wheel, and the Farmers' Union may be avoided if officers and members but heed the plain lessons which their stories teach.

Human nature has not changed materially since these organizations, one after another, made their swift brilliant rushes upward like skyrocket, lighted the landscape for a moment, and then for the most part lapsed into darkness. While the leaders feel that the farm bureau movement has many elements of strength and stability lacking in former organizations, yet it also has some of the same elements of weakness—elements which can be overcome only by a better understanding of the ever-present reality of these weaknesses and a closer concentration on the ultimate ends in view.

It is therefore doubly desirable that there should be widespread and general knowledge of the background, origin, growth, activities, and purposes of the Farm Bureau. A volume such as that presented herewith should serve a well defined need and I heartily commend the work of my friend and co-worker, the author, who has had unusual opportunities for observation and study of this movement in its various aspects.

J. R. HOWARD,

President, American Farm Bureau Federation.

Chicago, Ill.

June 5, 1921.

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**THE
FARM BUREAU MOVEMENT**

THE FARM BUREAU MOVEMENT

PART I

THE BACKGROUND

CHAPTER I

THE FARM BUREAU A PRODUCT OF EVOLUTION

IN the busy days of February, 1921, President-elect Warren G. Harding paused long enough in his cabinet-making to call to his Marion home for consultation and advice the President of the American Farm Bureau Federation. Six months before, this same farmer-leader sat for almost an hour on the south portico of the White House discussing agricultural problems with the then invalid President Wilson, who despite his physical infirmities showed keen interest in the message brought to him from the open country. A year previous to this White House conference no such organization as the American Farm Bureau Federation existed, and the name of J. R. Howard was practically unknown a hundred miles from his Iowa farm where he, like his neighbors, followed the cultivator back and forth between the long, hot, dusty rows of corn, rode the reaper through waving wheat fields, and fed carloads of cattle to market-topping plumpness.

In a little more than a year an amazing thing had happened. The leading, thinking farmers of the United States had joined together in a single great organization numbering more than a million members. They had pooled their strength and their organization resources and had launched forth upon a course of action which forthwith made itself felt in council chambers, in counting rooms, and in legislative halls throughout the land.

Almost overnight, it seemed, farmers and farmers' meetings everywhere were talking of marketing the nation's grain crop, the cotton crop, and the livestock crop coöperatively. They were laying plans for buying fertilizers and farm machinery and supplies, not merely in car-lots but in train-loads through coöperative agencies. They were proposing to take the business of farming in all its branches into their own hands and to regulate the intermediate agencies. State and national law-making bodies soon reflected the entry of organized and unified agricultural opinion and caused professional politicians no end of worry. Legislation showed the unmistakable imprint of a new force.

So swiftly did events follow one after another that the average city dweller little realized what was happening. Even the individual farmer, more or less isolated from the heat of the fray, found it difficult to grasp the full significance of the social and economic upheaval of which he was a part and to which he was lending his support.

To the casual observer this apparently sudden outburst on the part of the farmer seemed like a bolt out of a clear sky. Many were unable either to assign the causes or estimate the probable results. It is, in fact, necessary to know something of the background, something of the

long years of struggle—sometimes subdued, sometimes active—that preceded the advent of the American Farm Bureau Federation, if we are to gain an adequate idea of what it all means and what the probable course of development will be.

What to many seemed a sudden independent outburst was in fact but a phase in a long, slow growth. It is a mistake to think of the Farm Bureau Movement as something separate and complete in itself. It is but the culmination and latest expression of a crusade which had its inception back in the dark days following the Civil War and which with varying degrees of vigor and success ever since has pushed forward the farmers' fight for free and equal privilege and opportunity.

True, the movement suffered a severe backset following the collapse of the Grange in 1875-76, and again with the disintegration of the Farmers' Alliance in 1890-91. For a period of many years following this latter disaster the movement found expression only in a whirlpool of political "isms" without much semblance of coherence or unity. Yet throughout it all the same impelling motive has existed. Finally, when opportunity offered, the wheels of organization were again set in motion and the amazing growth which we know to-day as the Farm Bureau resulted.

The story of the rise and decline of the Grange, the Farmers' Alliance, the Agricultural Wheel, the Brothers of Freedom, the Northwestern Alliance, the Farmers' Union, the Farmers' and Laborers' Union, the Equity, and the Gleaners, together with the story of the farmers' attempt at independent politics as exemplified by Greenbackism, Populism, and Bimetallism, form a most interesting chapter in the development of our economic and

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political life and contain vivid lessons which our agricultural no less than our political leaders of to-day may well stop and ponder.

"The Agrarian Crusade" is the designation given by Solon J. Buck¹ to the almost three-quarters of a century of struggle carried on by agricultural interests in an attempt to better the relative position of the tiller of the soil in the social and economic structure. The name is well taken; in the crusades of old, all had a rather clear view of their ultimate objective, yet the means and methods of accomplishing these ends were all too often but poorly understood and unwisely planned. False starts were made, blind trails were followed and usually the band which started out with such fortitude and zeal disintegrated and fell apart before its purpose had been accomplished. But—again paralleling the dauntless crusaders of the 12th century—there was always another leader or group ready, it seemed, to grasp the banner ere it fell from the dying hand, to take up the struggle and push ever onward.

Throughout these struggles two prime objects have always been held in view; namely, to secure higher returns for farm products sold, and to curb the rapacity of "monopolies." To the farmer of 1870 the railroads, the manufacturers of farm machinery, and the bankers who held his mortgages represented the chief monopolies to be regulated and curbed. The fight to secure the regulation of railroad rates is a story in itself—and a most fascinating one. Sometimes the farmers united at the polls and elected candidates pledged to give them the desired laws. Failing in this, on at least two occasions farmers' parties were organized for frankly political pur-

¹"The Agrarian Crusade," by Solon J. Buck.

poses. Sometimes they endeavored to solve their economic problems by going into business themselves. They built and operated factories, ran wholesale houses and established strings of retail stores. At one time, finding the price of crops exceedingly low and the interest rates on their mortgages just as high as ever, they conceived the interesting plan of solving their difficulties through inflation of the currency. More plentiful money would raise crop prices, and mortgage interest rates remaining stationary could be more easily paid, they said.

Gradually, step by step, little by little, progress was made despite the clumsiness of the weapons with which the farmer had to fight at that time. The spirit of progress was kept alive, even though the farmers' organizations fell by the wayside one after another. These constant failures might have been expected to point the way to a successful organization built on a basis that would overcome the weaknesses of its predecessors. But no such development took place. Something seemed to be lacking. Each succeeding movement represented a mere burst of enthusiasm, apparently, and no basis for a great, solid, continuous organization was found. Following the failure of the Farmers' Alliance the feeling became prevalent that "farmers cannot stick together." Many felt that such a thing as a single great national farmers' organization was impossible. The thought was usually dismissed with the remark "the farmer is too much of an individualist to coöperate."

So, for a period of nearly a quarter of a century following the subsidence of the Farmers' Alliance very little was done toward organization on a wide scale. The National Grange gradually regained a portion of its lost glory—in fact became quite strong again in Ohio, New

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York, Pennsylvania, Maine and a few other states. The National Farmers' Union also made some claims to leadership, but most of the farmers' wrath against existing conditions was spent, during the period 1890 to 1910 in more or less sporadic political outbursts and local co-operative efforts.

But all unbeknown to farmer leaders, and quite unintentionally so far as any thoughts of national organization were concerned, a new force, or rather a new set of forces, gradually came into being about the end of the first decade of the new century, which was destined to lay the foundation for a new and far more powerful farmers' organization than any that had previously existed. The development of scientific agricultural information, the dissemination of this information through schools and through agricultural extension methods finally led to the advent of the county agricultural agent. The County Agent required a local group of farmers to work with, and through, and this gradually developed into a "farm bureau." The story of this development is highly important to any basic understanding of what the Farm Bureau Movement is and aims to accomplish, but the point to note at this time is that here at last we have a type of farmers' organization different from all its predecessors and involving organization principles which should make for permanence and strength. Just what these basic principles are and how they have been utilized will appear as we proceed. First, however, it will be necessary to acquaint ourselves with the background and foundation on which this new and to date highly successful organization has been reared.

CHAPTER II

EARLY AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS AND WHAT BECAME OF THEM

IT is difficult for most of us to-day, with our automobiles, our good roads, our telephones, our rural free mail delivery, our daily papers, and our social centers near at hand to realize just what life was like on the farm of fifty years ago. From occasional visits to isolated bits of country tucked far away here and there in some hilly or arid country and still evading the onward sweep of progress, we have perhaps gathered something of an idea of the simplicity of the rural life of that day. There are still certain sections where one may go and realize vividly to how great an extent the rural resident of that other period was forced to depend upon himself and his family and his nearest neighbors for all forms of amusement, instruction, and social intercourse. Seldom do we realize, however, the economic conditions under which he labored or the feeling of injury and resentment which he harbored.

Immediately following the Civil War the homestead movement spread out over the Mississippi Valley territory and on into the frontier West with amazing rapidity. The introduction of labor-saving machinery coming simultaneously¹ enabled both old and new farmers greatly to increase their acreages. The rapid extension of the

¹The McCormick reaper was invented in 1834 but did not come into general use until about the time of the Civil War.

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railways made long distance marketing feasible and the result was heavy overproduction and low prices for everything which the farmer had to sell. Farmers all over the country found it difficult to make a living. In the new western lands farms were heavily mortgaged and there was no money with which to pay interest. In the East and South farmers and planters who formerly had been accustomed to live along calmly and contentedly in a self-sufficient sort of way, but who had been gradually drifting away from the farm-home industry idea toward a system of greater specialization, suddenly found themselves in a position where they could no longer live as self-contained units, yet at the same time they were forced into competition with the fresh new fields of the West which were shipping in farm products at ruinously low prices.

To make things worse the fluctuations of the currency and the high tariffs in effect worked extra hardships upon the farmer, who as a producer must sell abroad in competition with foreign products and as a consumer of manufactured articles must pay at home the prices made arbitrarily high by the protective tariff.

But still another change in the farmers' position had come about which caused him no little worry and discontent. From the days of the earliest colonists the best people of the community had been land owners and farmers. There were no large manufacturing plants. Even the gunsmith and the carriage maker usually gave a portion of their time to the tilling of the soil. The farmer was inclined to rank himself somewhat above the small shopkeeper and the baker in the social scale. Much of this idea still prevailed down to Civil War days. But with the influx of immigrants, the rapid extension

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of the railways and the high protective tariff, manufacturing and trading soon made big strides forward. Towns grew rapidly, made improvements in living conditions and took on a superior air.

While in 1850 the total rural wealth amounted to \$4,000,000,000¹ and urban and miscellaneous wealth was rated at only a little over \$3,000,000,000, by 1870 the relations had so changed that city wealth stood at \$21,000,000,000 and rural wealth was placed at only \$10,000,000,000. City wealth was increasing three times as fast as farm wealth. Rural population likewise showed a steady proportionate decrease in relation to urban population.

The farmer could not but feel that somehow he was not receiving a square deal. He was being left behind in the economic scheme of things and very naturally he blamed the city dweller, who, judging from all external appearances, seemed to be growing quite prosperous and important.

The name of Oliver Hudson Kelley is ineffaceably linked with the Grange. In fact, Mr. Kelley was the Grange, its body and soul and all major appurtenances thereto, during the first two or three years of its existence. In 1866, Kelley, then a clerk in the office of the Commissioner of Agriculture at Washington, D. C., was sent on a tour of the Southern States to secure "statistical and other information from those States." He was so impressed with the distressing conditions noted that he determined to take steps to help matters, if possible.

¹U. S. Census figures with added true valuations of real and personal property as reported by statistician of the National City Bank, New York.

It was not merely the farmers' economic difficulties which struck Mr. Kelley. Such difficulties were to be expected in the South in the adjustment after the Civil War. It was rather their blind disposition to do as their grandfathers had done, their antiquated methods of agriculture, and, most of all, their apathy, which seized his mind. Kelley decided that this general situation was largely brought about by lack of social opportunities which made the existence of the farmer a dull, dread, monotony which in time incapacitated him for any change or progress in his outlook on life or in his attitude toward his work.

Being a member of the Masonic order, the idea struck Kelley that some such similar organization adapted to farm life and atmosphere might serve to bind farmers together for purposes of social intercourse and intellectual advancement. After some discussion among friends and advisers, and following a summer spent in the West in farming and thinking over the details of his plan, Kelley returned to Washington, this time as a clerk in the Post Office Department, and proceeded to put his scheme into effect. During the summer and fall of 1867 Kelley interested six associates in his plans and together these seven—"one fruit grower and six government clerks, equally distributed among the Post Office, Treasury, and Agricultural Departments"—met on December 4th, 1867, subscribed to a constitution, adopted the motto *Este perpetua*, and constituted themselves the National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry. William Saunders was made Master; J. R. Thompson, Lecturer; W. M. Ireland, Treasurer, and O. H. Kelley, Secretary.

The purpose of the Grange was declared to be "the

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advancement of agriculture," but it was expected that this advancement would come principally through educational efforts. To this end the position of Lecturer was created, whose chief duty was to provide a social and educational program for each meeting, entirely aside from the routine of the ritual.

The first local Grange installed by the National order was in Washington. It was made up largely of government clerks and their wives. It was not particularly serviceable in advancing practical agriculture, but it did perform a valuable service in testing out and improving the ritual. In February, 1868, Kelley resigned his clerkship in the Post Office Department and thenceforth gave his whole attention to the development of the new order. At that time Mr. Kelley was 42 years of age and a man of commanding presence, with full beard tinged with white, the high broad forehead of a philosopher, and the eager eye of an enthusiast. "An engine with too much steam on all the time" was the characterization given by one of his friends.

Kelley's energy and determination stood him in good stead, for only an enthusiast could have undergone the discouragements and trials that he was forced to meet before success finally crowned his efforts. The plan was to sell charters and install local Granges wherever interest could be aroused. From the funds thus derived Kelley was to pay his traveling expenses and a salary of two thousand dollars per annum. With the authority thus vested in him Kelley bought a ticket for Harrisburg, and with two dollars and a half in his pocket, started out to work his way to Minnesota by organizing Granges. He succeeded in selling four dispensations—one each for Harrisburg, Columbus, Chicago, and Fre-

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donia, N. Y. A mistake was made right at the start in selecting the larger cities. Only the Fredonia Grange proved a success. This was established not by personal visit but through correspondence with a farmer living there.

Kelley soon revised his plans and began to work among his neighbors and by correspondence from his farm in Minnesota. He was more successful in this but progress was discouragingly slow. It was impossible to make expenses and have enough left over to make a respectable salary. It became the hardest kind of a struggle against financial difficulties. Kelley once wrote: "If all great enterprises to be permanent must necessarily start from small beginnings, our Order is right. Its foundation was laid on *solid nothing*—the rock of poverty—and there is no harder material." Things went but poorly with the original unit at Washington. Kelley's associates began to lose interest and a debt of \$150 was incurred. They looked to Kelley to pay this amount and frequently reminded him of that fact. But in spite of all difficulties Kelley kept at his task and in his circular letters sent out to prospective organizers, bravely kept up the fiction of a powerful central organization at the nation's capital.

Finally, in May, 1868, a Grange was established at Newton, Iowa. In September the first permanent Grange in Minnesota was established at St. Paul through the assistance of Colonel D. A. Robertson.

Colonel Robertson and his associates introduced a new note in the organization's literature which was destined to have important results. Kelley had continued to stress the educational appeal and had purposely stayed away from legislative and commercial tendencies.

Colonel Robertson emphasized the idea that the Grange offered a means of protection against corporations and opportunities for coöperative buying and selling.

This was something tangible and practical. The farmers grasped the idea quickly and by the end of 1869 Minnesota had thirty-seven active Granges. At last the Grange had struck its gait and in October, 1870, Kelley moved his headquarters to Washington and prepared to push organization vigorously. By the end of the year nine states had established Granges and negotiations were well under way in seven other states. While Granges had been established as far east as Vermont and New Jersey and as far south as Mississippi and South Carolina, the chief field of activities at that time was in Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Indiana.

With the way to popular organization appeal once pointed out no opportunity was overlooked by the more enthusiastic members to capitalize such events and political or economic conditions as might lend themselves readily to the furtherance of the Order. The spirit of unrest and discontent following the Civil War formed an ideal seed bed in which the granger movement took root. Dissatisfaction with President Grant's administration brought definite reaction from farmer interests in 1871-72 and served to fan the flames of discontent still hotter. The period from 1870 to 1873 was peculiarly one of prosperity for the commercial, manufacturing, and speculative interests, and a period of adversity for the farmer. This served to bring to white heat the feeling of revolt against "monopolies" as most of the larger interests were designated. The farmer's special wrath was leveled at the railroads, which were just then undergoing frequent reorganization and merging. Oftentimes farmer bond-

holders suffered heavy losses. It was charged that despite the fact that the Government had by 1873 given the railroads about thirty-five millions of acres of land and was pledged to give the Pacific roads alone about one hundred and forty-five millions more, the roads were levying such exorbitant rates as to make farm crops unprofitable. When the Iowa farmer was obliged to burn corn for fuel, because at fifteen cents a bushel it was cheaper than coal, while at the same time corn was selling for a dollar a bushel in the East, he felt, quite naturally, that something was wrong.

When the panic of 1873 came along creditors who had hitherto carried farmers' mortgages and other obligations willingly, pressed the farmer for payment, at the very time when he found it impossible to realize on his crops. This was the last straw. The farmer decided that every man's hand was against his and that his only hope lay in organized combat.

The real spread of the Order got under way in 1872. Where previously there had been only scattered locals, territories were organized in solid blocks. States which had formerly resisted now rushed in to make up for lost time. Membership soon ran high into the hundreds of thousands. By the end of 1873 the Grange was organized in all but four states of the Union—Connecticut, Rhode Island, Delaware, and Nevada. By the end of the following year more than twenty thousand Granges were in existence and more than three-quarters of a million members were numbered on the rolls. At one time Indiana had one Grange for every 18 square miles, or an average of two for every township in the state.

The seventh annual convention of the National Grange was held at St. Louis in February, 1874, and because of

the widespread interest then manifested in the forward sweep of the granger movement, attracted much attention and occasioned much comment. Thirty-three men and twelve women attended the meetings, representing thirty-two state and territorial Granges and more than half a million members. At this meeting was adopted the "Declaration of Purposes of the National Grange." This document has ever since remained the guiding light and steering oar of the National Grange and with minor modifications was copied by many of the later agricultural organizations which were soon to come into being.

The general purpose of the Patrons of Husbandry was declared to be "to labor for the good of our Order, our Country, and Mankind." This, when translated into practical terms, was held to include efforts to enhance the comforts and attractions of homes, to maintain the laws, to advance agricultural and industrial education, to diversify crops, to systematize farm work, to establish coöperative buying and selling, to suppress personal, local, sectional, and national prejudices, and to discountenance "the credit system, the fashion system, and every other system tending to prodigality and bankruptcy." As to business, the Patrons declared themselves enemies not of capital but of the tyranny of monopolies, not of railroads, but of their high freight rates and monopoly of transportation. In politics, also, a rather diplomatic position was arrived at; the Grange was not to be a political or party organization, but its members were to perform their political duties as individual citizens. There was nothing, however to prevent the discussion in Grange meetings of economic questions which might have a political bearing.

But the Grange, strong as it was and going forward

by leaps and bounds, could not satisfy everybody. Some farmers objected to the Grange because it was a secret organization. Some dissented because it was non-partisan—they felt that it should come out frankly on the big political questions of the day relating to agriculture. Still others believed the Grange was taking too much interest in politics and should devote itself more strictly to educational and social advancement. For some the Grange seemed too radical; for others, too conservative. Thus it is not surprising to learn that at the very time that the Grange was going forward most rapidly, many other agricultural groups and societies were being organized. The most important of these earlier groups were the "Farmers' Clubs," at first more or less local and independent, but later consolidated into state associations. The chief characteristics differentiating these associations from the Grange were their lack of secrecy and their avowed political intent. This is important since it marks the first definite entrance into politics of the farmer as an organized unit.

During the years 1872 to 1875 the independent farmers' organizations multiplied much as the Granges did and for largely the same reasons. The Middle West was the scene of their greatest power. In Illinois the movement began even before the Grange appeared in the state. In states where the Grange had made such headway as to make the growth of other organizations difficult, as in Iowa and Minnesota, concessions were made to the political urge through the simple plan of adjourning the Grange meeting and taking up partisan political matters as an independent group.

At first the farmers hoped, by a show of strength, to secure the desired ends through one or both of the old

parties. Before long, however, they concluded that this was impracticable. Professional politicians were not inclined to get behind new and progressive issues which were not in accord with the established principles of their parties. "Stand pat-ism" seems to have characterized the dominant element in politics even at that date. The farmers realized that they were in for a long hard struggle against strongly entrenched commercial and financial interests and decided to organize their own political party. During 1873 and 1874 this new party was established in eleven Middle Western states. Known by various names in different states—Independents, Reformers, Anti-Monopolists, Farmers' Party, and the like—these organizations all had practically the same platform. Their principal demands were; first, the subjection of corporations, particularly railroad corporations, to the control of the state; and, second, reform and economy in government.

This made a platform on which both Grangers ¹ and

¹ Attempting at first to avoid taking any notice of political or politico-economic questions, the National Grange soon found this becoming one of the most prominent features of the work and by 1876 a detailed plan of obtaining legislative attention had been developed. The plan included a system of petitions to be drawn up by the national Master and sent to the state Masters, who in turn were to send them to the subordinate Granges for consideration and signatures. These signed petitions were then to be returned to the national Master for presentation to Congress. In addition the national Master was to prepare circular letters to individual Congressmen, requesting reports on the progress of legislation desired and urging the necessity for action. These letters were to be sent to each state Master to be remailed to the Senators and Representatives from their respective states.

The Grange always insisted upon its non-political character, however, and in 1874 thought it necessary to again make plain its position on this subject. This the officers did in the following words:

"We emphatically and sincerely assert the oft repeated truth taught in our organic law, that the Grange, National, State, or

farmers' club members could unite—in fact, many farmers belonged to both organizations—and so the campaign against “monopoly” was inaugurated. We have not the space here to tell in detail how the battle opened in Illinois in 1870 with a constitutional amendment making it mandatory for the state legislature to pass laws to prevent extortion and unjust discrimination in railway charges; how in January, 1873, the Supreme Court of that state declared unconstitutional a law passed by the legislature of 1871 attempting to carry out the provision demanded; how in April of that same year the farmers flocked to the state capital and so impressed the legislators that they passed a much more stringent and effective law for the regulation of railroads, and then in the June elections turned out the judge who had declared their railroad law unconstitutional and elected in his place their own candidate; how the farmers were aroused to a white heat through a state-wide campaign and in the fall elections completely broke up all party lines so far as county politics was concerned; of how in many states the Democrats soon combined with the Farmer Party, with the notable exception of Missouri where the combination was with the old-line Republicans; and finally of how they forced state after state to pass

Subordinate, is not a political or party organization. No Grange, if true to its obligation, can discuss political or religious questions, nor call political conventions, nor nominate candidates, nor even discuss their merits in its meetings.”

However, it seemed impossible to keep away from the big political questions of the day and at the seventeenth annual meeting, in 1883, the Grange came out frankly for greater attention to politico-economic questions and advocated wide discussion both within and without the Grange. Not long thereafter the first Legislative Committee was appointed by the Grange to go to Washington and further the interests of agricultural legislation. This was as close, however, as the Grange ever came to direct action as a political unit.

legislation regulating the railroads both as to rates and as to service, established state railway commissions and thus laid the foundation for the establishment of the Interstate Commerce Commission.

As Buck says in his book, "The Agrarian Crusade," "The contest between the railroads and the farmer was intense while it lasted. The farmers had votes; the railroads had money; and the legislators were sometimes between the devil and the deep sea in the fear of offending one side or the other." The farmers' methods of campaign were simple. Often questionnaires were distributed to all candidates, and only those who went on record as favoring railroad restriction were endorsed by the farmers' clubs and committees. Agricultural conventions, sometimes even a meeting of the state Grange, would be held at the capital of the State while the legislature was in session, and "it was a bold legislator who, in the presence of his farmer constituents, would vote against the measures they approved." When the railroads in Illinois refused to lower passenger rates to conform to the law, adventurous farmers often attempted to "ride for legal fares," giving the trainmen the alternative of accepting the low fares or throwing them bodily from the train.

The methods of the railroads in dealing with the legislators were open to severe criticism. Whether or not the numerous charges of bribery were true, the railroads did undoubtedly distribute favors among legislators disposed to favor their interests. In Iowa passes were given only to those legislators who voted in the railroad's interests. Opportunities were given friendly legislators to buy railroad stocks at prices far below their real value, special privileges of various kind were granted and in a variety

of ways the railroads found means of making it worth while for legislators to favor their interests.¹

While farmers' organizations of the period were greatly interested in such political questions as inflation of the currency, the better distribution of credit facilities, the tariff, taxation reforms, Civil Service reforms, and economy in government, the keen edge of their fighting appetite seems to have been appeased with the succession of victories over the railroads and so about the year 1876 interest in the farmers' political clubs and the Grange, in so far as it had been political, began to wane. The political angle of the reform movement was taken over largely by the professionals. The farmers' independent political parties had not been particularly successful in state politics, and national politics was plainly beyond their organizing ability at that time. But the farmers' progressive

¹The railroad lobby at the 1872 session of the legislature was said to have been made up of four able lawyers, who posed as farmers and members of the Grange. Near the close of the session a resolution was adopted by the Senate as follows:

Whereas, there has been constantly in attendance on the Senate and House of this General Assembly, from the commencement of the session to the present time, four gentlemen professing to represent the great agricultural interests of the State of Iowa, known as the Grange; and,

Whereas, these gentlemen appear entirely destitute of any visible means of support; therefore be it

Resolved, by the Senate, the House concurring, that the janitors permit aforesaid gentlemen to gather up all the waste paper, old newspapers, etc., from under the desks of members, and they be allowed one postage stamp each, *The American Agriculturist*, What Greeley Knows About Farming, and that they be permitted to take with them to their homes, if they have any, all the rejected railroad tariff bills, Beardsley's speech on female suffrage, Clausen's reply, Ranson's speech on barnacles, Blakeley's dog bill, Teale's liquor bill, and be given a pass over the Des Moines Valley railroad, with the earnest hope that they will never return to Des Moines.—*Senate Journal*, 1872.

So little did the *Chicago Tribune* understand the true situation that it printed an editorial censuring the Iowa senators for treating these grangers so badly.

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principles and reform ideas did not lack for experienced professional backers and so during the following two decades we find the farmer vote supporting in a more or less loosely organized way the greenback movement, Populism, the People's Party, and then finally practically ceasing to exist as a unit with the defeat of William Jennings Bryan, the Democratic-Populist candidate for President, in 1896.

But the Grange had another string to its bow. The fight against "monopoly" was taken up along economic lines as well as through strictly educational and political means. The "middleman" seemed to stand, on the one hand, between the farmer and the high prices ultimately paid by the consumer for his crops, and on the other hand between the farmer and the relatively low manufacturer's price for farm machinery and supplies. To the farmer the middleman represented little more than a parasite living off the products of the soil and giving but little in return. Distribution on a wide scale was at that time a relatively new development and the functions of the middleman were little understood. Undoubtedly, then as to-day, the inefficiencies of the retail system made distribution costs unreasonably high.

Grange stores, usually but not always embodying the "Rochdale plan," sprang into existence everywhere and soon were doing a thriving business. The buying of farm machinery and supplies was pooled into community orders and special rates obtained from manufacturers or wholesalers who could be induced to make this concession. Soon these community orders were being grouped into county orders and within another year whole states were buying farm machinery and certain supplies as a single unit. Manufacturers and dealers who would not

meet the Grange demands for low prices with former selling costs eliminated, were practically forced out of business.

Coöperative methods were also applied to the marketing of certain farm crops and coöperative creameries and elevators became familiar objects in many states. Large storage and sales pooling houses were also established to handle the wool crop and tobacco crop for Grange members.

Incensed at the extension and revival of patents on reapers, cultivators and other farm machines and even sometimes the fraudulent use of patent rights to secure higher prices, the Grange at last decided to enter the manufacturing field itself. In Iowa where the Grange was particularly strong and had early established an agency for coöperative buying, the refusal of harvester manufacturers to sell at wholesale prices was met by a decision on the part of the Grange to make its own harvester. A patent was purchased and for a time machines were manufactured and sold at about one-half what other harvesters cost. In 1874 about 250 of these machines were made and prospects looked bright.

Up to this time the officers of the National Grange had issued repeated warnings against rapidly embarking upon commercial enterprises. Many state officials also frowned on the practice and it was usually due solely to his latitude of individual power that a state agent could go as far as was frequently done in undertaking this type of activities. But deceived by the apparent success of the Iowa Grange in its manufacturing ventures, the National Grange decided in 1874 to embark upon the manufacture of agricultural implements on a large scale. It had received well over \$250,000 that year, in addition to regular

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dues, and it was decided to use this capital in establishing factories. A disposition on the part of certain state officers to demand distribution of this fund among the states was a strong factor in this decision. This plan offered a means of retaining control of the fund. Grange agents went about the country buying up patents and planning factories in Kansas, Iowa, Missouri, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, and Kentucky.

Then came the crash.

The Iowa harvester factory failed in 1875 and bankrupted the state Grange. Other failures followed. Many of the patents purchased were found to be worthless. Infringement suits were brought against the Grange, central wool pooling houses went broke, notably one at Steubenville, Ohio; local Granges disbanded for fear they might be held responsible for the debts incurred; and in the Northwest, where activity had been greatest, the Order almost disappeared.

In 1874 the Grange membership was placed at 268,388, and in 1875 it had risen to 858,050, but by 1877 the number had dropped down to 124,420. The decline continued until about 1895, when the membership numbered barely 100,000. Following this the original Grange principles again took hold and slow, gradual progress along conservative lines has taken place ever since.

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THE FARMERS' ALLIANCE

Following the collapse of the Grange a brief period of reaction and disappointment set in, but the hopes of the benefits to be derived from organization were too alluring to be allowed to die out. Soon we find springing up a

succession of other organizations embodying many of the principles of the Grange and attempting to avoid its mistakes. Most of these organizations took on either at the start or shortly thereafter a distinctly political flavor.

The Alliance—first the Texas State Alliance, then the Southern Alliance, and soon thereafter the Northwestern Alliance—began to gain strength about 1885. These organizations emphasized the social and political features and in the South, particularly, gave much attention to coöperative features. An attempt was made in 1889 to unite the various Alliance groups into one national organization but without full success.

The St. Louis meeting, at which the attempt at consolidation was made, was nothing short of dramatic in its staging and appeal. The attention of the entire country was drawn to the proceedings of the Alliance, thus giving it added strength and prestige. The major feature was the joining of hands with organized Labor “for mutual defense and protection as well as for united political action.”¹ Hon. Terence V. Powderly, then the most conspicuous figure in the world of organized labor, as leader of the Order of Knights of Labor, addressed the Alliance. A committee of his organization headed by himself, indorsed the Alliance platform and “for the purpose of giving practical effect to these demands, the legislative committees of both organizations agreed to act in concert before Congress for the purpose of securing the enactment of laws in harmony with the demands mutually agreed upon.”

These demands included: the abolition of national banks, free coinage of silver, prohibition of dealing in futures of all agricultural products, prohibition of alien

¹M. A. Dunning, *Farmers' Alliance History*.

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ownership of land, equal taxation and reduction of public expenditures, fractional paper money for use in mills, government ownership and operation of the means of communication and transportation. This agreement further stated "in order to carry out its objects, we will support for office only such men as can be depended upon to enact these principles in statute law, uninfluenced by party caucus."

In the 1890 elections ¹ the Alliance made itself strongly felt. Dunning says :

"In this contest the Alliance was no passive factor. It made itself both known and felt in many States. Its methods differed somewhat in different sections, but the one idea of a change of conditions obtained all through the contest.

"In the South, the Alliance directed its efforts to the primaries, while in the North and West it made the fight at the polls. In the South the new Alliance principle, known as the sub-treasury plan, furnished the basis for nearly all contention. The Alliance stood squarely upon that measure, and made its provision the gauge of fealty. Congressman after congressman who could not stand the test was deposed, and a tried Alliance man was put in his place. In the West, the St. Louis demands, or compact, were made the basis of operations.

"The history of politics furnished no parallel to the campaign in the West, especially in Kansas and Dakota.

¹ After these elections forty members of the new Congress were pledged to support the demands of the Farmers' Alliance and its leaders were said to have selected beforehand the place which they wished this group to occupy "on either side of the center aisle in the House of Representatives," where they expected to hold the balance of power, and to take the place of the "Center" in the French Assembly.—F. M. Drew, *Political Science Monthly*, June, 1891.

Independent candidates were nominated, and a square fight was made between the reform element and the old political parties. As the campaign advanced, the feeling became more bitter and intense. An idea prevailed among the members of the order that a failure would prove the destruction of the Alliance, and result in the complete bankruptcy of nearly all its members. Because of this belief, the struggle became fierce and strong. Past affiliations were forgotten; party ties were broken; and an entirely new political alignment effected. The two old parties aided each other where it was possible, and the entire power of partisan machinery was worked to its utmost capacity. Opposition simply provoked increased efforts, and political trickery increased watchfulness, and the effective work of the independents continued amid it all. Education on economic lines had been doing its perfect work, and the people were filled with a desire to obtain further information. As a result of this, these reform meetings were the largest political gatherings ever seen on this continent. When the end came, and the smoke of battle had cleared away, the ground was found thickly strewn with the political corpses of the candidates of both old parties.¹ . . .

"The effects of this political contest will go down to fu-

¹ Hamlin Garland called the Populist members in Congress, "The Alliance Wedge" and described the nine representatives headed by "Sockless" Jerry Simpson of Kansas as a "sort of breakwater between the two old parties." In the March, 1892, issue of the *Arena* he said:

"Great forces are moving. The House of Representatives is a smouldering volcano. . . . The young Democrats are almost in open rebellion against (the methods and practices of) the old legislators. . . . The Republicans are apprehensive,—almost desperate. Place holders are beginning to tremble, but in the midst of it all, the men who are advocating right and justice instead of policy, sit ready for the discussion and eager for the struggle. They have everything to win and nothing to lose in the vital discussion and reorganization which in their judgment is sure to come. *They have a fixed purpose, which is to push for the relief of the people.*"

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ture generations. It marked an epoch in the history of American politics. It was a deserved rebuke to old party methods, and a rugged notice that conditions must be changed."

Shortly after the elections in the Fall of 1890 the Alliance held what was perhaps its most famous convention. This was held at Ocala, Florida, and the "Ocala Platform" is still referred to as embodying most of the principles for which organized agriculture is fighting. Dunning reflects the atmosphere of the occasion when he says :

"This was doubtless one of the most important gatherings, in many respects, that was ever held on American soil. . . . Following, as it did, immediately after the close of a political campaign of remarkable surprises, it was compelled to bear a burden of pressure from both the old parties—one being driven by disaster to the verge of despair, and the other elated by success to the point of dictatorial assumption. The Republican party hoped that the meeting would result in certain indiscretions which would break the power of the Alliance, and permit that party to regain its waning strength. The Democratic party was anxious to have the Alliance recede from its advanced position on economic questions, in order to make coöperation more probable. Again, there was a strong element from the West demanding independent action, and at the same time showing as a result of such a movement, the fruits of the last election. This was met by a conservative force largely from the South, but really from nearly all the States represented, which considered it unwise and untimely. The wily politician was there also, and as usual dangerous to all honest purposes; the traitor and breeder of discord was not wanting; and the coward could be occasionally met with. . . .

"For weeks and months certain newspapers and indi-

viduals had been poisoning the minds of the brotherhood with slanderous assaults upon certain members of the Order, whose downfall would best serve the purposes of the politician of either party, and prepare the way for the overthrow of the Order, if possible."

The leaders were, however, able to steer a moderately conservative, middle course and all factions were united on a strong platform not greatly different from the St. Louis platform. Labor, apparently, had no active part in this meeting, however.

With such an excellent start it is rather difficult to understand just why the Alliance failed so completely within a few years thereafter. One clue is given, however, in the treasurer's report for 1890. The entire gross receipts for the year were \$13,530.55 and of this only \$11,231.27 were from membership fees. And this at a time when more than a million farmers were in some way or other "affiliated" with the Alliance! At five cents each—the amount set aside for the national organization—this should have amounted to not less than \$50,000.00. The Alliance was not a closely organized, business-like group. While it was the originator and parent of numerous cooperative enterprises, and while it undoubtedly moved its members to a great expression of political strength, the national organization was little more than the equivalent of the machinery to handle an annual convention and maintain certain inexpensive lines of educational propaganda between times. It evidently had but little control over the state units and when internal quarrels arose, cooperative ventures failed, and political dissensions created strife, the central organization with its weak treasury found itself helpless and drifting. While the Alliance continued to exercise political power in a more or less dis-

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organized way for several years later—in fact was the forerunner and chief mainstay of the “People’s Party” of 1892—its usefulness as an agricultural organization may be said to have ended about 1890.

THE AGRICULTURAL WHEEL

Another organization which gained considerable headway in the middle 80’s was the Agricultural Wheel. This organization came into being in Prairie County, Arkansas, in 1882, and soon expanded into a state-wide organization. An amalgamation was effected with a still different agricultural order, known as the Brothers of Freedom, and then began the campaign in nearby states. Tennessee and Kentucky were soon interested and in 1886 the National Agricultural Wheel was established. By November, 1887, eight states had organized in the Southwest and enrolled a total membership of half a million.

The desirability of consolidation with the Alliance soon became evident to all since both were making rapid growth in the same territory and along almost identical lines. Such a consolidation was effected in 1888 and the combined order was known as the Farmers’ and Laborers’ Union of America. Later this name was changed to the National Farmers’ Alliance and Industrial Union.

THE FARMERS’ EDUCATIONAL AND COÖPERATIVE UNION OF AMERICA

In the story of the “Farmers’ Union” we have, in a general way, a repetition of the history of the Grange

and the Alliance, although the Farmers' Union never attained to the prominence and power of the other groups mentioned.

Founded in 1902 under the leadership of Mr. Newt Gresham of Emory, Texas, who "determined to make at least one desperate effort in behalf of the farmers of his neighborhood," the movement exhibited much of the old spirit of enthusiasm and is said to have spread with lightning rapidity "as if the hand of Newt Gresham had rubbed the Genii lamp of loyalty . . . and an Aladdin army of militant men, with a deadly concentration of purpose that would brook no denial, had come into almost instant existence."¹

Threatened during the first year with bankruptcy, the Union was able in 1903 to save the farmers of Rains County, Texas, about \$6,000 through what was known as the "ginners' contract." Nearly \$500 was also saved by collective shipping of cotton seed. Through these and other successes the organization grew to state proportions and then soon spread to other states. Its membership fees were low, its promises large, and soon the farmers flocked to join. The movement spread from the gulf region north and east to Maryland on the one hand and westward to California and Washington on the other hand.

To a considerable extent the Union was built upon the ruins of the Farmers' Alliance. In thousands of communities the locals of the wrecked Alliance still existed as independent units and when the organizers of the Farmers' Union came along, offered them a state and national affiliation, and invited them to join in another crusade, they eagerly accepted.

¹Charles S. Barrett, "Mission, History and Times of the Farmers' Union."

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This plan of organization made for rapid growth and by 1909 the Union claimed a large membership.

By 1914 the Union was well established in twenty states of the South and Mid-West, and in Oregon and Washington in the Northwest.

The constitution began with the statement,

“Speculators and those engaged in the distribution of farm products have organized and operate to the great detriment of the farming class.

“To enable farmers to meet these conditions and protect their interests, we have organized the Farmers’ Educational and Coöperative Union of America and declare the following purposes:

“To secure equity, establish justice and apply the Golden Rule.

“To discourage the credit mortgage system.

“To assist our members in buying and selling.

“To educate the agricultural classes in scientific farming.

“To teach farmers the classification of crops, domestic economy, and marketing methods.

“To systematize methods of production and distribution.

“To eliminate gambling in farm products by Boards of Trade, cotton exchanges, and other speculators.

“To bring farming up to the standard of other industries and businesses.

“To secure and maintain profitable and uniform prices for cotton, grain, livestock, and other products of the farm.

“To strive for harmony and good will among all mankind and brotherly love among ourselves.

“To garner the tears of the distressed, the blood of the martyrs, the laughter of innocent childhood, the sweat of honest labor, and the virtue of a happy home as the brightest jewels known.”

The new Union thought to avoid the errors which had injured or destroyed earlier organizations of farmers. Dues were arranged with much thought and "in the most democratic manner possible."

Many newspapers, inspired by organized capital as represented in the cotton trust and other similar groups, seized every opportunity to undermine the foundations of the young but flourishing organization. Politicians, too, came into the organization for their own purposes and it became necessary to discipline certain locals. A local union in Mississippi which endorsed a political candidate had its charter revoked by the State President. The charter of the first local in Texas was also abrogated for similar reasons.

The Union emphasized the coöperative and other economic features rather than the social and educational. Coöperative stores in considerable numbers were owned and in 1910 the Farmers' Union had a "system of warehouses in every cotton-growing state in the South."¹ It was claimed that there were more than a thousand cotton warehouses under Union Control where the farmers stored their crops and on occasions held them for fair values. The aim was for the cotton farmers, through their association to keep absolute control of the crop until it reached the spinners either in Europe or at home.²

¹ Charles S. Barrett, "Mission, History and Times of the Farmers' Union."

² The cotton brokers made every effort to retain their position between the cotton producer and the English spinner and contended that the cotton farmers of the southern states were not able to do business without the intervention of some great speculative company between producer and consumer. Said one of the state business agents in the South when the warehousing system was at its height, "When we see our cotton at the ports with great holes cut between all the ties and at least ten per cent of its original net weight gone, the shortage having been made up with old coffee

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A great variety of coöperative enterprises was started. In fact President Charles S. Barrett has for some years had a "standing offer of \$1,000 to any one who can name a coöperative undertaking of an agricultural nature which the Union has not tried." The Union undoubtedly did a great deal of good in bringing better conditions in the South. In Kansas and Nebraska excellent progress has been made in the coöperative selling of grains and live-stock through the state Union organizations. The Nebraska Union in 1920 did a total business of more than one hundred millions of dollars. In Kansas this work has been fostered by Mr. Maurice McAuliffe and in Nebraska by C. H. Gustafson. It is significant that the organizations in these two states and in Virginia and Texas where similar local coöperative and educational activities are prominent, make up about all the large units that are now left in the National Farmers' Union.

There has always been much speculation and indefiniteness about the total strength of the Union membership. The popular idea has been—and it must be stated that this was encouraged by its officers—that at the period of the greatest popularity from two to three million members belonged to the Union, and even yet a claim of half a million members is made. Keen observers of the period believe, however, that owing to the looseness of organization it was probably never possible to correctly count the active membership and that 400,000 would liberally represent all the actual dues-paying members ever in the Na-

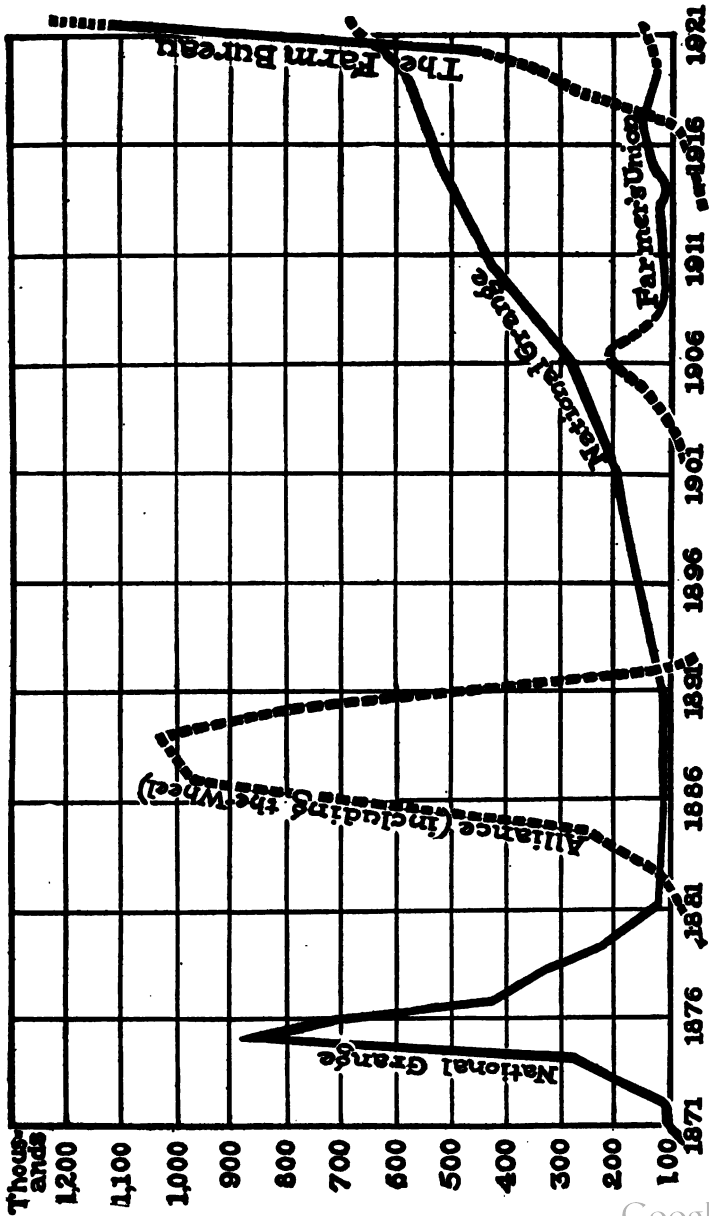
sacks or anything they could get hold of to bring it up to its original weight, there is little wonder that European spinners condemn the condition of American cotton as received in Europe." This agent quotes a significant remark of a cotton speculator that he "would rather have the 'rake off' between the gin and the port than the entire profit made upon the cotton crop." It was the alleged "rake off" that the Union sought to prevent.

tional organization at any one time. In 1919, when the popular assumption of a membership of more than half a million was current, the treasurer's report showed an income representing 23,201 members in the South and 102,949 in the North, the latter mostly in Kansas, Nebraska, and Iowa.

The graph on page 35 showing the actual paid-up membership from year to year, based on the treasurer's report of dues received, does not give a true picture of the course of the Farmers' Union. It might appear from this graph that the organization history of the Union differs from that of the preceding organizations, and that after the first moderate reaction following the early enthusiasm the organization settled down to a steady, constant numerical strength. A careful study of the state membership figures discloses that this is not the case. The membership was constantly dropping out and it was only the inflow of membership from one new state after another that maintained the apparent level. In other words the course of development has been in the nature of a wave starting in the South and slowly covering one state after another in its northward and westward movement, but each year losing in the older states all it gained in the newer states.

Thus while in 1909 Arkansas paid into the national treasury \$1,860, by 1913 this amount had dropped to \$519. Georgia, similarly, dropped from \$1,180 to \$493 during the same period and continued to decline thereafter. On the other hand North Carolina which paid only \$800 into the national treasury in 1909 was paying \$4,762 in 1913, and Nebraska jumped from nothing in 1909 to \$3,055 in 1913.

Some of the Union's difficulties are indicated in the



Solid lines indicate official records of paid-up memberships. Actual active membership is usually somewhat larger. Dotted lines indicate that no official records are available but represent best information as to membership trends.

following picturesque, but typical, extracts from an address given by its President, Mr. Barrett, in 1909:

"Our ranks contain some of the noblest and purest hearted and ablest men in the country. They also contain some of the gravest, shrewdest, and most consummate villains who have managed to escape the penitentiary. For one hundred of our members who do not know the meaning of a lie, there are at least one who could give the devil cards and spades and beat him hand running. They have Ananias hopelessly distanced. They make Machiavelli, whose sinister motto was that "the end justifies the means," seem like a cooing babe. One reason they are not to-day wearing ball, chain and stripes is that they can run just a little faster than the detective and the sheriff.

"There are moles within the organization, and they have able and willing assistants on the outside, who are not only mole-like in their nature and operations, but oftentimes resemble as well the jackal and the lion. Some of them are politicians, running the gamut from governors, governor-elect, senators, representatives and heads of Government departments, to candidates for dog-catcher.

"A good many of them, the majority perhaps, are scheming business men. You might call them the modern pirates of commerce. They are as cruel, a great deal more cunning, I will admit braver, and equally as resourceful as the black-bearded gentry under Hawke and Kidd, who terrorized the seas for so many years. . . .

"They have made up their minds, these men, that 'suckers' must pay the freight. They are anxious and able to move the heavens above, the earth beneath, and the waters under the earth to compass this and other ends. They do not balk at perjury. Falsification they have made into a fine art. Dishonesty they believe to be the best policy. And as far as brains are concerned, they

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can command in their own presence, or through their purses, the ablest talent in the nation."

The Union's plan of organization was too nearly like that of the Alliance to make for permanency. It did succeed admirably in keeping fairly clear of politics. It made economic effort its basis of appeal. This in itself has never proved a satisfactory basis for a national agricultural organization. It can be but sectional at best, since crop interests are sectional. If the coöperative effort fails, it seems almost certain to carry the parent organization with it; and if it succeeds it is likely to become so strong as to ignore the overhead organization which helped to bring it into being. In either case the national organization suffers unless it is strong and in position to offer services not possible in the sectional, commodity-handling group.

THE ANCIENT ORDER OF GLEANERS

Here and there a farmers' organization has made a success on a state-wide basis throughout a long term of years. Because of the contrast with the fate of the larger, more ambitious organizations, no less than because of their intrinsic value to the states affected, several of these groups deserve special mention.

The Ancient Order of Gleaners was founded in Michigan in 1894 by Grant Slocum and several associates. It resembles the Grange somewhat in its form of organization, ritual, and lines of work. It has, however, given continuous and consistent attention to coöperative marketing of farm products and purchasing of supplies and

has built up rather extensive business undertakings. In 1907 the Gleaner Clearing House Association was organized with \$40,000 capitalization, the stock being held by some 1,500 members. Each local has a clearing house manager and sometimes a branch clearing house, through which any member or local may make shipments to the central clearing house. A branch was established at Chicago. Elevators have been built, and insurance has been made a prominent feature of the Order. The Gleaners claimed to be the oldest and (in 1918) the largest farmers' coöperative organization in the Middle West. In 1919 the Gleaners numbered a total of about 85,000 members, 74,000 of whom were in Michigan. On Detroit's busiest thoroughfare the Gleaners have erected what is probably the most beautiful office building in the world owned by farmers. It is of stone and patterned after the Greek "Temple of Victory" at Athens.

THE EQUITY

The American Society of Equity was established in several states centering around Illinois and Wisconsin, about the beginning of the new century. The Farmers' Society of Equity split off from the parent organization some years later and now has branches in several states. The Farmers' Equity Union is also an outgrowth of the original Equity movement but of later origin than the Farmers' Society of Equity. All these organizations make coöperative effort the central feature of their programs but the fraternal and educational features are not overlooked.

At one time the officers of the American Society of

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Equity boasted of nearly 200,000 members. By 1914, however, the organization had become so disrupted that the membership dwindled down to a very small number. In 1918,¹ Wisconsin, the stronghold of the "Equity movement" had only 6,000 members. The following year, however, more aggressive management took charge and taking advantage of the important issues that arose from the war period a membership given as 40,000 was achieved. Internal disturbances resulting in splits and on several occasions in the establishment of independent organizations, have prevented the Equity group from attaining much real national importance.

The Equity groups deserve much credit for developing coöperative effort on a sound, though relatively small basis at a time when the reaction from the failures of the earlier farm organizations had created the feeling that farmers would never again be able to successfully organize along economic lines.

The Equity Union, under the leadership of C. O. Drayton, of Greenville, Illinois, has made a slow but steady growth along lines so unique as to deserve special mention. A local organization will not be established unless a minimum of 200 farmers will sign up and each subscribe to a \$200 share in some local coöperative enterprise. The local needs are then studied and a type of coöperative enterprise started which will best meet the needs of that community. The aggregate of these coöperative investments under the Equity Union to-day totals many millions of dollars.

¹ *Wisconsin Equity News*, Aug. 13, 1919.

CHAPTER III

WHY FARMERS ORGANIZE

A REVIEW of agricultural affairs in the latter half of the last century cannot fail to strike one with astonishment at the amazing spontaneity of state-wide, and even nation-wide, organization among farmers, and with the tenacity and perseverance with which farmers held to the organization idea in the face of the most disheartening failures.

No such activity along organization lines was shown prior to the Civil War, neither was it strongly in evidence during the fifteen years following 1895. What impelled farmers to organize in the 70's and 80's and why did this movement subside in the middle 90's only to reappear again about 1910, and in an entirely different form but with amplified strength a few years thereafter? When we look across the seas we find that this same phenomenon was world-wide. An English observer¹ in 1893 said:

“Almost everywhere, certainly in England, France, Germany, Italy, Scandinavia, and in the United States, the agriculturists, so instinctively conservative, are becoming fiercely discontented, they declare they have gained less by civilization than the rest of the community, and are looking about for remedies of a drastic nature. In Eng-

¹*The Spectator*, Vol. LXX, p. 247.

land they are hoping for aid from councils of all kinds; in France they have put on protective duties which have been increased in vain twice over; in Germany they put on and relaxed similar duties and are screaming for them again; in Scandinavia—Denmark more particularly—they limit the aggregation of land; and in the United States they create organizations like the Grangers, the Farmers' Leagues, and the Populists."¹

So far as the American farmer is concerned the explanation offered by Buck² apparently gives a satisfactory understanding of the impelling motive which brought about the organizing activities of the 70's and 80's:

"Prior to about 1870 American history appears to have had two distinguishing and characteristic features to which nearly everything else can be related. In the first place it was the history of the occupation of a continent by a civilized people; and, secondly, it was the history of a struggle between two incompatible social and economic systems established in the two great sections of the country (the North and the South). One of these features passed into the background with the Civil War and reconstruction, the other with the practical disappearance a few years later of land suitable to the purposes of

¹ It is pertinent to recall here Ward's research discovery that numerous agricultural organizations existed before the Christian era, as confirmed by the indisputable evidence of inscriptions on ancient tombs and tablets; that they were of sufficient importance to have their protests and demands heeded and complied with; and that they were as far in advance of all but the most recent of American rural organizations as to have "actually confederated with the trades-unions in matters of mutual benefit. . . ." "It is a fact worthy of note, however, that from the beginning of the Christian era to the present (19th) century, no trace of agricultural organizations can be found." This is in marked contrast with the fact that since 700 B. C. trades-unions have existed continuously up to the present time and in the 17th century, as "guilds" attained prominent economic and social importance.

² Solon J. Buck, "The Granger Movement."

the individual pioneer. Before the Civil War there had been no great accumulations and combinations of wealth; but the industrial stimulus of the war, the development of the corporate idea, and the great advance in the applied sciences brought such accumulations and combinations rapidly to the front, while the disappearance of the frontier closed a door of opportunity which had previously been open to the oppressed and discontented. The result was a tendency toward protective and coöperative organization along class lines, of which the labor movement is one aspect, and the farmers' movement another. The Grangers organized to fight this "greater capitalism" wherever it made its appearance. They saw it in the great railroad corporations, and they strove to subject them to public control; they saw it in politics, and they organized independent parties to oust it; they saw it in great industrial establishments and their agents, the middlemen, and they established coöperative enterprises in the endeavor to restore their economic independence. The Greenbackers and the Populists believed that the stronghold of this greater capitalism was in the monetary system of the country, and they proposed to break its power by the issue of fiat money. Thus in one form or another the struggle has been carried on by agricultural organizations, by labor unions, and by political parties, or factions within political parties, until it seems to have culminated in a nation-wide movement for political, social, and economic reform."

It was simply the same old story over again, of a people or a class cornered and harassed to the point where they began to strike back. They used the only tools they found at hand; namely, combination and coöperation. In this they had a good example through observation of the power and force secured by combinations of

capital and management on the part of commercial and financial interests—the very groups they sought to fight.

As is nearly always the case where pent-up feelings finally burst through, radical remedies are suggested and very often carried into immediate effect. The guillotining of the French aristocracy in the wild days of the French Revolution was a “radical” means of remedying the acute and plainly obvious shortcomings of the government of Louis the Sixteenth, but it is the penalty controlling groups have to pay for their obstinacy and stupidity in refusing to heed the calls of the common people when they ask for relief. A river dammed up, finally breaks through and often sweeps out the dam and everything before it.

Most of the agrarian movements that started in the 70's were hysterical, almost fanatical in many instances, particularly when a group here and there began to taste of the powers of combination. The Grange which started as a conservative, educational and social organization was seized upon as a vehicle to carry forward the farmers' political and economic fight and, as we have seen, was wrecked thereby. In fact, the Grange never regained its strength until it returned to approximately its original purposes.

With loosely organized units, inexperienced leaders, and radicalism rampant, it was but natural that mistakes should be made and dissatisfaction and jealousies creep in. The farmers' natural love for liberty and individuality of expression accounts largely for the vast number of rival organizations that sprang up. This so divided and confused the farmers' strength and unity of action that it was only on the great central thought of governmental relief and reform of one kind or another that the farmers

of the period could unite. This naturally expressed itself best through political parties later organized and developed by professional politicians. This development served to break up the farmers' organizations as such and focus attention on political campaigns.

The farmers' hopes, embodied in the People's Party-Democratic Party fusion candidate, William Jennings Bryan, were built up to a high peak in 1896. The disastrous panic period of low prices in 1893 had made the farmer even more bitter than ever against existing conditions. His agricultural and coöperative organizations had gone to pieces one after another in rapid succession and now they proposed to place their entire hope and reliance on the outcome of the election. Marcus A. Hanna, the real leader of the opposing party, was an almost perfect illustration of the type of man whom the farmers had been fighting—a man of great wealth who prosecuted his business deals ruthlessly and deliberately used politics as a means of furthering his business interests. William McKinley, his close personal friend and neighbor, was recognized as simply a tool in Hanna's hands. Hanna knew him to be "safe" and as putty in his hands. Feeling ran extremely high. Class lines were drawn closer and closer as the campaign advanced. Toward the end the Populist executive committee issued the following statement:

"There are but two sides in the conflict that is being waged in this country to-day. On the one side are the allied hosts of monopolies, the money power, great trusts, and railroad corporations, who seek the enactment of laws to benefit them and impoverish the people. On the other side are the farmers, laborers, merchants, and all others who produce wealth and bear the burdens of taxation.

The one represents the wealthy and powerful classes who want the control of the Government to plunder the people. The other represents the people, contending for equality before the law, and the rights of man. Between these two there is no middle ground."

At the end of what was the most bitterly contested campaign since Lincoln's time the Republican Party won by a narrow majority—some 500,000 votes.

The Farmers' Party was wrecked and the farmer felt that he had been thwarted in still another effort to secure reforms. With his organizations, both economic and political, almost completely destroyed after two decades of continuous struggle, with farm crop prices at low levels, with burdens of debt hanging over him, and with what he believed to be his enemies in the saddle, it is not surprising that the farmer was discouraged. Organization was at a standstill for many years. It was not until toward the end of the first decade in the new century that the organizing spirit again made any material headway.

Two other circumstances contributed materially to this period of dormancy in agricultural organization. Prices of farm crops began to rise about 1900 and a period of unusual prosperity set in on the farm. Fully as important, however, was the fact that at last the political party in power had awakened to the demands of the farmer and had brought about many of the reforms and adopted many of the progressive measures he had been demanding for years. Some of the proposals of the People's Party that had been most ridiculed were the first adopted by the party in power. Regulation of railroads by national and state government, popular election of United States Senators, rural free delivery of mails, parcels post, postal savings banks, Federal improvement of roads, anti-trust

legislation, a Federal land bank system, and even greater flexibility of the currency have all been brought about in the relatively short period since 1896 and as a direct result of the spirit of progressiveness started by the prolonged agitation of the agricultural group.

This was the period in which the expression "farmers won't cooperate" was heard on every side and was reiterated so many times, even by farmers themselves, that it became rather the generally accepted view. Many despaired of ever establishing in America any cooperative system comparable to that of Denmark, for instance, which was even then a long established success and credited with having worked an economic revolution for the betterment of agriculture in that land.

In deploring the lack of the cooperative spirit among farmers, in 1908, L. H. Bailey pointed to the prevalence of tenancy and to the farmer's disposition to "sell out and move West" as prime reasons for this lack of community cohesion and adds:

"Even when permanently settled, the farmer does not easily combine with others for financial or social betterment. The training of generations has made him a strong individualist, and he has been obliged to rely mainly on himself. Self-reliance being the essence of his nature he does not at once feel the need of cooperation for business purposes or of close association for social objects (as does his European brothers). In the main, he has been prosperous, and has not felt the need of cooperation. If he is a strong man, he prefers to depend on his own ability. If he is ambitious for social recognition, he usually prefers the society of the town to that of the country. If he wishes to educate his children, he avails himself of the schools of the city. He does not as a rule dream of a rural organization that

can supply as completely as the city the four great requirements of man—health, education, occupation, society. While his brother in the city is striving by moving out of the business section into the suburbs to get as much as possible of the country in the city, he does not dream that it is possible to have most that is best of the city in the country.”

Discussing the same subject, Kenyon L. Butterfield, President of Massachusetts Agricultural College, said:¹ “Among no class of people is individualism so rampant as among farmers. For more than a century the American farmer led the freest possible social life. His independence was his glory. But when the day of coöperation dawned, he found himself out of tune with the movement, was disinclined to join the ranks of organized effort, and he prefers even yet his personal and local independence to the truer freedom that can be secured only through coöperative endeavor.”

The baneful influence of the cities in constantly drawing away from the country its best blood—in its most active and ambitious young men—soon became recognized also, and finally a few of the keenest statesmen realized and enunciated the principle which must be the guiding thought in any plan for the betterment of agriculture, namely, that country life must be made so attractive both as to material returns and as to social advantages as to offer inducements that can compete with those of the city. Sunshine and blue sky are fine as a starter, and every true son of the soil values them dearly, but they are not a complete and satisfying substitute for a bathroom with running water and a little ready money in the bank.

¹ Chapters of Rural Progress, Kenyon L. Butterfield, 1908.

It also eventually became apparent to a few of the foremost leaders that the city should be no less interested in the welfare of the agricultural population than should the latter be in themselves. It began to dawn upon manufacturers and merchants that the farmer is their best customer and that the more prosperous and satisfied he is, the more business and profits they will realize.

The business man is not ordinarily an altruist, but he must be given full credit for the courage to back his interests with his dollars—even though it takes a long look ahead to see returns. So about the beginning of the new century for the first time we see the city and the country beginning to unite in an effort to better farming conditions.

President Theodore Roosevelt, always forward looking, always resourceful, and always sympathetic with country life, in 1908 conceived the idea of conducting a survey and investigation to ascertain just what could be done to improve matters and if possible inject a little enthusiasm into the country life movement.

Because President Roosevelt's letter in which he asked Professor Bailey to serve upon this "Commission on Country Life," sets forth so well the conditions of the period and the spirit of progress pervading, we give it practically in full:

The White House
Washington

Oyster Bay, N. Y.
August 10, 1908.

My dear Professor Bailey:

No nation has ever achieved permanent greatness unless this greatness was based on the well-being of the great farmer class, the men who live on the soil; for it

is upon their welfare, material and moral, that the welfare of the rest of the nation ultimately rests. In the United States, disregarding certain sections and taking the nation as a whole, I believe it to be true that the farmers in general are better off to-day than they ever were before. We Americans are making great progress in the development of our agricultural resources. But it is equally true that the social and economic institutions of the open country are not keeping pace with the development of the nation as a whole. The farmer is, as a rule, better off than his forebears; but his increase in well-being has not kept pace with that of the country as a whole. While the condition of the farmers in some of our best farming regions leaves little to be desired, we are far from having reached so high a level in all parts of the country. In portions of the South, for example, where the Department of Agriculture, through the farmers' coöperative demonstration work of Doctor Knapp, is directly instructing more than thirty thousand farmers in better methods of farming, there is nevertheless much unnecessary suffering and needless loss of efficiency on the farm. A physician, who is also a careful student of farm life in the South, writing to me recently about the enormous percentage of preventable deaths of children due to the unsanitary condition of Southern farms, said:

"Personally, from the health point of view, I would prefer to see my own daughter, nine years old, at work in a cotton mill, than have her live as tenant on the average Southern tenant one-horse farm. This apparently extreme statement is based upon actual life among both classes of people."

I doubt if any other nation can bear comparison with our own in the amount of attention given by the government, both federal and state, to agricultural matters. But practically the whole of this effort has hitherto been

directed toward increasing the production of crops. Our attention has been concentrated almost exclusively on getting better farming. In the beginning this was unquestionably the right thing to do. The farmer must first of all grow good crops in order to support himself and his family. But when this has been secured, the effort for better farming should cease to stand alone, and should be accompanied by the effort for better business and better living on the farm. It is at least as important that the farmer should get the largest possible return in money, comfort, and social advantages from the crops he grows, as that he should get the largest possible return in crops from the land he farms. Agriculture is not the whole of country life. The great rural interests are human interests, and good crops are of little value to the farmer unless they open the door to a good kind of life on the farm.

This problem of country life is in the truest sense a national problem. In an address delivered at the Semi-Centennial of the Founding of Agricultural Colleges in the United States a year ago last May, I said:

“There is but one person whose welfare is as vital to the welfare of the whole country as is that of the wage-worker who does manual labor; and that is the tiller of the soil—the farmer. If there is one lesson taught by history it is that the permanent greatness of any state must ultimately depend more upon the character of its country population than upon anything else. No growth of cities, no growth of wealth, can make up for loss in either the number or the character of the farming population.

* * * * *

“The farm grows the raw material for the food and clothing of all our citizens; it supports directly almost half of them; and nearly half the children of the United

States are born and brought up on the farms. How can the life of the farm family be made less solitary, fuller of opportunity, freer from drudgery, more comfortable, happier, and more attractive? Such a result is most earnestly to be desired. How can life on the farm be kept on the highest level, and where it is not already on that level, be so improved, dignified and brightened as to awaken and keep alive the pride and loyalty of the farmer's boys and girls, of the farmer's wife, and of the farmer himself? How can a compelling desire to live on the farm be aroused in the children that are born on the farm? All these questions are of vital importance not only to the farmer, but to the whole nation.

* * * * *

"We hope ultimately to double the average yield of wheat and corn per acre; it will be a great achievement; but it is even more important to double the desirability, comfort, and standing of the farmer's life."

It is especially important that whatever will serve to prepare country children for life on the farm, and whatever will brighten home life in the country and make it richer and more attractive for the mothers, wives and daughters of farmers should be done promptly, thoroughly and gladly. There is no more important person, measured in influence upon the life of the nation than the farmer's wife, no more important home than the country home, and it is of national importance to do the best we can for both.

The farmers have hitherto had less than their full share of public attention along the lines of business and social life. There is too much belief among all our people that the prizes of life lie away from the farm. I am therefore anxious to bring before the people of the United States the question of securing better business and better living on the farm, whether by coöperation between

farmers for buying, selling and borrowing; by promoting social advantages and opportunities in the country; or by any other legitimate means that will help to make country life more gainful, more attractive, and fuller of opportunities, pleasures and rewards for the men, women and children of the farms.

I shall be very glad indeed if you will consent to serve upon a Commission on Country Life, upon which I am asking the following gentlemen to act:

Professor L. H. Bailey, New York State College of Agriculture, Ithaca, N. Y., Chairman.

Mr. Henry Wallace, *Wallace's Farmer*, Des Moines, Iowa.

President Kenyon L. Butterfield, Massachusetts Agricultural College, Amherst, Massachusetts.

Mr. Gifford Pinchot, United States Forest Service.

Mr. Walter H. Page, Editor of *The World's Work*, New York.

* * * * *

Sincerely yours,

Theodore Roosevelt.

Professor L. H. Bailey,
New York State College of Agriculture,
Ithaca, N. Y.

But while the period 1896-1910 was one of agricultural "disorganization," so to speak, the idea of agricultural organization never died out. Purely coöperative groups were making considerable progress along the lines of establishing coöperative creameries, elevators, and stores. The Grange made considerable growth during the latter part of this period, and certain groups like the Equity and the Gleaners attained some prominence in Wisconsin, Michigan and certain other states. But no broad gen-

eral organization comparable to those of earlier days existed.

But, as we shall see, new forces were at work in the country and the scenes were being laid for a big new nation-wide organization based on principles and organized on a system entirely different from anything that had preceded. First, however, we must note the rise of the farmers' coöperative movement which was in itself a strong influence preparing the ground for complete agricultural organization.

CHAPTER IV

THE RISE OF THE COÖPERATIVES

THE coöperative movement, or the Rochdale movement as it is often called, began in the little town of Rochdale, England, in 1844. Twenty-eight weavers, harassed by poverty, unemployment, adulterated foods, and extortionate prices, came together and formed a society to raise capital and start a store of their own to supply their principal personal and family needs. This first store was extremely small and capital grew with discouraging slowness, but the basic principles of coöperation were worked out and developed and from this small beginning has grown a movement of such amazing size and strength as to constitute to-day a most important factor in the world's social and economic structure.

Following the earlier struggles of the Rochdale pioneers the movement gained considerable headway in England, spread to Scotland and later to continental Europe. There it made its greatest growth in France, Germany, Russia, Italy, and Denmark. In the last-named country coöperation has become so thoroughly incorporated in the agricultural life of the nation that the great majority of all selling of agricultural products and purchasing of farm supplies and equipment is now done through coöperative organizations.

The coöperative movement in the United States dates

back to about 1850, but the earlier efforts were interrupted by the Civil War, and the decade following the war had practically closed before any appreciable progress was made. The first efforts in this country were patterned after the original English societies and were of the "consumer" type rather than the "producer" type. That is, they were organized among consumers for the purpose of buying foods and other supplies to better advantage. Organization among small producers to sell to better advantage did not develop until later, in the United States.

Of the efforts of the Grange along this line we have already spoken. Most of the more ambitious attempts came to an early end because of inexperienced managers and failure to follow true coöperative principles. Some of the smaller coöperative stores persisted, however, even to the present day. Club buying in small groups became a regular activity among Grangers. The Workingmen's Protective Union established a considerable number of coöperative stores about the middle of the last century but they all failed, usually because of violation of the Rochdale principles. At the close of the Civil War, the Labor Unions took up officially the movement for coöperative stores and made some progress, but the true coöperative spirit seemed to be lacking, the movement waned and later gave way to the more aggressive labor movement based on strikes and legislation. Recently there has been renewed effort on the part of Union leaders to establish coöperative purchasing.

As early as 1885 the California fruit growers formed what was known as the "Orange Growers' Protective Association" to work in a coöperative way to get better freight rates and better treatment in the eastern markets

to which they were compelled to ship their fruit. The distance from market made their marketing problems especially difficult and steps toward coöperative marketing of their products were soon taken. The California Fruit Growers' Exchange soon developed. Although its earlier years were fraught with troubles, both internal and external, and numerous reorganizations took place, absolute necessity forced some sort of continuance of the project. Since the earlier years the Exchange has been uniformly successful and it now has a membership of about 8,000 growers and in 1918 shipped more than 15,000,000 boxes of citrus fruits.

Here and there throughout the East and South, other groups of shippers—usually growers of highly perishable products—formed coöperative groups that operated with more or less success. The grape marketing association of the Chautauqua-Erie grape belt in New York State was one of the earliest of these, the original organization taking place in 1885. The first organization made about all the organization mistakes a coöperative group could possibly make and a series of reorganizations have been necessary, each correcting some of the mistakes of its predecessor. It is only in comparatively recent years that stable and apparently permanent success has been attained.

Various fruit and vegetable shipping groups in the South have operated successfully for a decade or more. The Eastern Shore Truck Producers' Association of Virginia has marketed practically the entire early potato crop of the eastern shore of Virginia for many years and with a high degree of success to its members.

Spurred on by the success of these coöperative groups scattered about here and there, and harassed by extremely

low prices and unfair methods employed by the "line" elevators, farmers of Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, and the Dakotas finally took things into their own hands in the early 90's and began to establish their own local elevators on a coöperative basis. The most vigorous sort of opposition was encountered and for a time this movement made small progress. The strongly entrenched line elevators, usually owned by big milling and financial interests, enlisted the aid of the railroads in refusing siding privileges, "forgetting" to furnish cars and "losing" shipments. The banks refused credit at critical times. In many instances where farmers were about to form a local organization the rival concern sent in organizers and arranged for a "coöperative" elevator which was coöperative in name only. Many of these still exist.

By 1910 much progress had been made in several states, however, and in 1915 Illinois had 192 farmer-owned elevators; Iowa, 228, and North Dakota 264. Since 1915 the movement has been quite rapid and it is officially stated that to-day there are more than 4,000 such elevators in active operation, largely in the middle west.

As early as 1889 a state association of coöperative elevator managers was organized in Iowa. Various other states developed in this same direction from time to time and in 1912 the National Council of Farmers' Coöperative Grain Dealers' Associations was organized at Minneapolis. The declared purpose was to "break the grip of the grain trust and secure a square deal for the farmer." Specifically, to secure fair freight rates; to break railroad boycotts of farmers' grain shipments; to secure better prices through coöperative marketing at terminal points; to purchase supplies, coal, etc., at fair prices; to safeguard farmers' rights through legislation, secure gov-

ernment inspection and grading of grain, and to secure the strength necessary to place the farmers' cases before the Interstate Commerce Commission or Congress whenever necessary.

In 1920 this body was organized in twelve of the grain belt states and through the local elevators was said to handle the grain produced by nearly half a million farmers. It is now known as the Farmers' National Grain Dealers' Association.

In certain states, notably Nebraska and Kansas, the Farmers' Union developed extensive coöperative elevator systems. The Nebraska group did a business amounting to approximately one hundred million dollars in 1920.

Coöperative creameries and cheese factories have also been a prominent marketing feature in several states, particularly Wisconsin and Minnesota, for the past fifteen years. In 1915 the number of creameries was placed at 5,500 and cheese factories at 3,500; about one-third of which were coöperative. It is estimated that there are to-day approximately 3,000 creameries and 2,000 cheese factories in the United States operated coöperatively.

Coöperative livestock shipping associations have become very numerous in the past two or three years. Starting in the little town of Litchfield, Minnesota, in 1908, the idea spread slowly until in 1916 there were some 500 livestock shipping associations, mostly in Minnesota. But in the short space of four years following 1916, the number shot up to more than 3,000. Most of the middle western states have formed state livestock shipping associations and a national federation of state livestock shipping associations is already functioning. The principal

advantages claimed for the local shipper are: first, the elimination of approximately one-half of the local selling costs; and second, securing a higher market price through being able to offer uniform, graded carloads.

At Omaha, St. Paul, Chicago, and several other western points, coöperative livestock shippers' associations have established their own commission agencies receiving all shipments and selling on the open market the same as any other commission concern.

Starting with the earlier attempts of the Farmers' Union to establish coöperative cotton warehouses and a cotton marketing system in the South, the movement largely died out with the subsidence of the Union, although a large number of these warehouses are still owned locally by farmers. But in 1920 the idea of coöperative marketing of the cotton crop suddenly flamed up again and a national cotton marketing association was organized. This organization contemplates state and county units, ownership of bonded warehouses and a central sales agency. To date but fair progress has been made in putting this plan into operation on a belt-wide scale. Several states have, however, made a very creditable start. Of the 1920 crop Oklahoma farmers held in a coöperative pool some 400,000 bales and Texas farmers held 600,000 bales.

The milk producers, likewise, have been having their marketing battles to fight and organizations have been formed in practically all the large milk producing centers or, rather, around all the principal milk consuming centers. It was early determined that the producers shipping to a given consuming center constituted the proper organization unit. Thus we have the New York Dairy-men's League; Michigan Milk Producers' Association;

Milwaukee Milk Producers' Association; the Queen City Milk Producers' Association; Oregon Dairymen's League, and other similar groups. In 1917 these federated into a national organization known as the National Milk Producers' Federation.

The winning of the milk wars in Boston and Chicago in 1915-16 and in New York City in 1916-17 added greatly to the strength of this organization and in 1919 it was said to number nearly 400,000 members.

It will be seen from the above that following the discouraging failures of the earlier coöperative efforts in the 80's a new coöperative movement set in with the beginning of the new century. In some instances the growth was slow merely because it had to make its way unaided and farmers were "poor coöperators." In other cases, as in the grain trade, coöperation had to fight against the most severe opposition. Gradually, however, the idea secured a solid footing and, constantly spurred on by the success of a few outstanding examples such as the California fruit growers, the movement gained momentum and covered the field. Within the past few years, however, we have witnessed the development of an entirely new phase of coöperative effort. Through the formation of national federations of state and local groups, the coöperatives are preparing to take over the next step in the road to the ultimate consumer; that is, the wholesale handling at the terminal market.

Further reference to the results of this coöperative movement will be made in a later chapter. The point to be noted here is the fact that these various coöperative efforts, extending over a period of nearly a quarter of a century and in the later years touching large numbers of farmers, operated as a means of bringing farmers to-

gether and inculcating organization principles. Even the failures taught useful lessons. The development of the coöperative idea must be accounted one of the important factors in laying the foundation for a new "farmers' movement" to follow.

CHAPTER V

NEW FORCES AT WORK—AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION

AS the period in agricultural development previous to 1896 was marked by its hysteria and impulsiveness of action, so the period following 1900 was marked by the search for agricultural education and the "evangelization" of the country.

The period of overproduction having passed with the century there was again some object in producing bigger and better crops. New and improved methods were sought, new crops, new breeds of livestock, and new soil fertility systems adopted. Insects, plant and animal diseases, and blights were investigated and means of abatement devised.

The Agricultural or "Land Grant"¹ colleges author-

¹The act of Congress of July 2, 1862, known as the first Morrill Act granted to each state 30,000 acres of public land for each Senator and Representative in Congress to which the state was entitled by the census of 1860. All money derived by the sale of these lands was to be invested in interest bearing securities. The interest was to be used for the endowment, support and maintenance of at least one college where the leading object should be to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts.

The distribution of land was made in two ways. Those states that had public lands within their borders could locate and take up the actual acres. If a state had no such lands subject to entry, then land "scrip" was issued to it. The land represented by such scrip could not be located by the state but had to be sold and the individual purchaser might locate his land in any state having lands open to public entry. In 1890 Congress, in what was called

ized by the Morrill Act of 1862, and the Agricultural Experiment Stations established by the Hatch Act¹ of 1887, had finally overcome the opprobrium² attached through the appellation "book farming," under which they had so long labored, and were beginning to bear fruit. The more progressive farmers here and there sought out and used the tested discoveries and improvements.

Among the earliest of the agricultural educational agencies to really reach out into the country was the "farmers' institute." The history of the origin of the farmers' in-

the Second Morrill Act, supplemented these funds by an additional endowment of \$26,000 annually for each state and territory and in 1908 a further annual endowment of \$25,000 was provided for by the Nelson amendment.

¹The Hatch Act provided that \$15,000 per year be given out of the funds arising from the sale of public lands, to each state and territory for the establishment of an agricultural experiment station, which must be a department of the land grant college, except in the case of those states which had established experiment stations as separate institutions prior to the passage of the act. In 1906, under the Adams Act, an additional endowment of \$15,000 annually was provided.

Various states had done something toward establishing experiment stations previous to the passage of the Hatch Act. Most of them were inspired by the work being conducted at the Rothamsted Experiment Station in England. The first state experiment station established in America became an accomplished fact in 1875, after several years of agitation and spurred on by a private contribution of \$1,000 by Orange Judd and an offer on the part of the trustees of Wesleyan University, at Middletown, Conn., of the free use of the chemical laboratory in the Orange Judd Hall of Natural Science. Professor Robert Atwater was the first director.

²"During the first three decades of the existence of the state colleges of agriculture and the mechanic arts their most rapid and popular development was along the lines of engineering and the mechanical industries. The teachers of these subjects found subject matter easily reducible to pedagogical form, and the students found that the definite instruction and practice work along these lines gave good training and led to salaried positions in our rapidly developing manufacturing and transportation industries. Agriculture, on the other hand, at first afforded no sufficiently organized body of knowledge which teachers could present in a strong way to students, and there were few salaried positions open in agriculture."—Senator Knute Nelson, Senate Document No. 189, 1907.

stitute is obscure, but it is certain that the start was made earlier than is generally supposed. Something seems to have been done along this line on an organized scale as far back as 1869, but many years before that date the itinerant lecture system for the instruction of farmers had been used. As early as 1842 or 1843 such lectures were inaugurated by the New York State Agricultural Society.¹ The 1871 report of the board of trustees of Iowa Agricultural College contains an account of "farmers' institutes" in which it is stated "the experiment of holding farmers' institutes in different localities in the state, for the purpose of giving familiar lectures on prominent topics in agriculture, was tried last winter with very gratifying success. Institutes, lasting three days, were held at Cedar Falls, Council Bluffs, Washington, and Muscatine, at each of which points we found an enthusiastic gathering of farmers." Vermont, Michigan, and several other states inaugurated institutes about this same time.

On February 1, 1871, the Massachusetts State board of agriculture voted "that the various agricultural societies of the Commonwealth be requested to organize an annual meeting for lectures and discussions at such time and place as may be convenient for each society; these meetings to be denominated 'The Farmers' Institutes of Massachusetts.'" This request was later changed to an order, and a bounty granted each organization conducting such an institute. During the year 1890, 36 societies held 129 institutes.

Thus it will be seen that the "institute" was an outgrowth of and fostered by the early agricultural organi-

¹ Quoted by L. H. Bailey, in Bul. 79, U. S. D. A., Office of Expt. Stations.

zations of a conservative educational nature,¹ as distinguished from the politico-economic organizations described in Chapters II and IV.

The legal authority for the holding of institutes in Michigan in connection with the Agricultural College, is held to be derived from a clause in the law of 1861 reading: "The State board of agriculture may institute winter courses of lectures for others than students of the institution, under necessary rules and regulations."

This is probably the first instance of legal authority conferred upon an educational institution in this country to carry instruction to farmers who are not students in the college. Gradually this type of work, including the institutes in most states, was taken over entirely by the College of Agriculture and either gave rise to or augmented the "Extension Department" of these institutions.

In 1891 approximately \$85,000 was appropriated by

¹ The place that the "farmers' institute" filled at the close of the last century is well shown by the following quotation from a letter written by W. H. Morrison, at that time state superintendent of institutes in Wisconsin:

"I wish that you had the history of this movement in Wisconsin—how the institutes have stimulated a pride and respect for agriculture, bringing farmers together to compare and pool experience. They give the farmer an opportunity to meet masters in agriculture, men who make the business of farming a science and a life work. They build up and unite farm interests, energize and fertilize local thought, make men and women better satisfied with the farm, and will have the tendency to keep a fair portion of the best boys on the farm. They are revolutionizing agriculture in this State, and their power was felt and heeded by our legislature last winter. Fortunately, our farm institute work is under the auspices of our State University. My office is in the same building with Professor Henry, director of the experiment station, and whatever may come from his experiments that will aid the farmers of the State, is taken by our farm institutes and scattered all over the State. The fact is, they are doing more for the State than the originators of the law ever thought or expected. They builded better than they knew. The institutes are educating our farmers to better methods, and increasing the rewards of the farm."

the different state institutions in North America for farmers' institutes. In addition, the services of hundreds of instructors from the agricultural colleges were given without charge. By 1899, with three exceptions, every state and province was conducting farmers' institutes and a total of approximately \$170,000 was being spent. It was calculated that in that year 2,000 institutes were held in the United States and more than half a million farmers were in attendance.¹

By 1900 these institutes had begun to undergo a transformation. Farmers were constantly asking for more specific instruction, and courses of technical lectures upon definite lines of farm work were in demand. "Dairy schools," "schools of horticulture," "soils schools" and similar lines of instruction for non-student farmers were undertaken.

It was soon realized, too, that after all half a million was but a small proportion of the twelve to fourteen millions of men and women engaged in agriculture and that in the South, particularly, whole states were doing practically nothing to reach the farmer who had not yet awakened to the new spirit of inquiry and progress. Agricultural publications had multiplied extensively and the reading farmer could make considerable progress by carefully studying his periodicals, but the reading habit was far

¹In Wisconsin there were held in 1899 approximately 120 institutes with an average attendance of over 30,000 persons, in Massachusetts 125 institutes, attendance 11,000; West Virginia, 60 institutes, attendance 14,000; Minnesota, 50 institutes, attendance 300 to 1,000 each; Indiana, 100 institutes, attendance 25,000; Kansas, 135 institutes, attendance 20,000; Michigan, institutes in nearly every county, attendance reported at 120,000; Nebraska, 60 institutes, attendance 26,000; Pennsylvania, 300 institutes, attendance 50,000; Ohio, 250 institutes, attendance 90,000; New York, 300 institutes, attendance 75,000; and in California, 80 institutes were held with a total attendance of 16,000.

less prevalent on the farm than than now and here again the South was particularly weak.

Plainly something had to be done to speed up this educational process if any considerable progress was to be made. Agricultural information already developed and available must be *taken out to* the farmer if he hesitated to come and get it.

Then set in a period of agricultural evangelization the like of which was never before seen in this or any other country. The professor deserted his classroom, packed up a few charts, some illustrative material and perhaps a pruning knife or a soil augur, and started out to spread the gospel of better farming. No missionary in Africa ever labored harder or more conscientiously to convert his hearers to the true gospel than did these itinerant preachers of the *science* of Agriculture. "Neither snow, nor rain, nor gloom of night" could abate their fervor or stay their progress. In the opinion of the writer their efforts have never been fully appreciated nor their praises half enough sung.

Starting in with the established institutes these instructors and their corps of assistants, which soon developed, spread out rapidly into other fields. The high school and the remotest country school were invaded, meetings were held in churches, schoolhouses, theaters, town halls, country stores, camp meetings, at picnics, and quite frequently in the orchard and open field. A little later the whole classroom—professors, charts, illustrations, blackboards, livestock, poultry, soil samples, fertilizers, fruit trees, farm machinery, and other paraphernalia—was loaded upon special trains¹ and hauled from station to station and

¹In 1911 a total of 16 agricultural trains were run in Ohio, including 13 different railway systems, delivering lectures at 418 stations, to a total audience of 45,100 persons.

lectures and demonstrations given from one end of the state to another, the staff and train crew living on the train, at the expense of the railroad company, for weeks at a time.

Prior to 1901 only one agricultural college, that at Cornell University, had what was known as a department of extension. In 1901, Illinois organized an extension staff and in 1903 three other states did likewise, but it was not until 1910 that the extension movement under the direction of the colleges of agriculture really got under way. By the beginning of that year thirty-three colleges had separately organized agricultural extension work.¹

In 1912 the Agricultural Extension Department of the Ohio Agricultural College, one of the most active along extension lines, offered the following lines of work throughout the state. Agricultural Extension Schools (of two weeks' duration each), farmers' institutes, special meetings for women, demonstrations in spraying fruit trees, pruning, tree surgery, packing fruit, grading eggs, making butter, mixing commercial fertilizers, also field meetings, agricultural trains, fair exhibits, news service to county papers, identification of plants, fruits, insects, etc., help in introducing agricultural work in rural schools, special lectures for clubs, granges, and other organizations, farmers' reading courses, and a variety of special bulletins.

Soon the teaching of agriculture in the public schools became a common practice, although the advocates of the "classics" put up strenuous objections, and since at that

¹The first Director of Agricultural Extension employed in the United States was Mr. A. B. Graham, who assumed his duties in connection with the College of Agriculture of Ohio State University on July 1, 1905. Professor Perry G. Holden followed in Iowa six months later—January 1, 1906.

time they largely controlled college policies, the general acceptance of agriculture as a college entrance credit was long delayed. The battle of Latin and Greek versus Agriculture is still fresh in the memory of many an educator of fifteen years ago.

As early as 1888 Minnesota had established an agricultural high school on the campus in connection with the college of agriculture but it was twenty years or more before this idea made much progress.¹ By 1907 a total of thirty such schools were scattered throughout the United States.

About the beginning of the new century a movement toward consolidation of the one-room country schools into centralized schools serving a wide area made a start and this opened up the way to more effective teaching of agriculture in the grades. This movement started in Ohio and Indiana and made slow progress for a number of years. In 1907 there were only about two hundred such consolidated schools in existence, but from then on the growth was rapid and in Indiana alone approximately 1,000 consolidated schools were in operation in 1921. Four thousand one-room country schools—nearly half of all in the State—were abandoned to make way for this progressive development.

The teaching of agriculture in the common schools soon led to the development of boys' and girls' clubs. Corn clubs were the first form developed on a large scale but pig clubs, poultry clubs, calf clubs, cotton clubs, canning clubs, peanut clubs, and various other types soon followed. The idea of lending a little glamour to rural

¹ The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 provides Federal and State funds for such a high school in every county when proper local conditions are met.

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achievements took hold and in many states magnificent prizes were offered the winners in corn growing contests. In Ohio, California, Texas, West Virginia, and a number of other states special cars, or even special trains of prize winners were sent on tours to Washington to meet the Secretary of Agriculture, shake hands with the President, and be fêted generally. Bankers, merchants, public spirited citizens, and state officials all joined hands to pay the expenses.

A veritable renaissance of agricultural education and interest in the farm seemed to have set in.

CHAPTER VI

THE COMING OF THE COUNTY AGENT

FOR the appearance of the next great step in agricultural development—the birth of a new principle which was destined to have far-reaching results—we must look to the South. As was the case with Oliver Kelley, the founder of the Grange, it was the misfortunes of the South that inspired Dr. Seaman A. Knapp to develop a line of work which was to redirect the whole agriculture of the South, and to create an educational method which when transplanted to the North laid the foundation for what we to-day like to call the *business* of agriculture.

Dr. Knapp had spent an active life in educational and agricultural work in New York State, Iowa, and Louisiana. He was the friend, neighbor, and adviser of Secretary of Agriculture James Wilson and had made trips to Japan, China and the Philippine Islands to study and subsequently introduced into this country Japanese rice. In 1902 he had just returned from a visit to Porto Rico where he had made a study of the agricultural possibilities of that island, when the Mexican boll weevil began its depredations in the Texas cotton fields.

Dr. Knapp made several visits to Texas that year and out of the richness of his twelve years' experience in teaching northern families how to farm in Louisiana,

developed the essentials of a plan for meeting the cotton boll weevil situation—not so much combating it, perhaps, as adapting the agriculture of the region to it. The following year an appropriation of \$250,000 was obtained from Congress and despite his advanced years—Dr. Knapp was 70 at that time—he arranged to take charge of what was named the “Farmers’ Coöperative Demonstration Work.”

Dr. Knapp’s idea was to teach by doing rather than by telling. It had been his observation that where one Louisiana farmer had followed instructions and raised an unusually good crop of rice, the neighbors never failed to inquire personally as to just how it had been done and to try the next time to follow the improved methods as nearly as possible.

In an endeavor to give a true picture of how the work started and grew in the South, we can do no better than quote at some length from the story told by W. F. Proctor, State Agent in charge of Farmers’ Coöperative Demonstration Work in Texas at the time of Dr. Knapp’s death:

“The country had become alarmed at the financial disaster that followed the progress of this foreign invader (the Mexican boll weevil). As it advanced, panic and ruin followed, and it seemed in 1903 that the whole cotton industry of the South would be destroyed unless something could be done to exterminate it, or at least stay its progress.

“In the spring of 1903 the business men of Terrell, Texas, called a mass meeting to consider the boll-weevil situation and to take action to try to avert the panic which always followed its invasion of new territory. Dr. Knapp was sent for and addressed the meeting. His explanation of the situation and his ideas of

the proper remedy convinced those people that he was right, and they then and there determined to give Dr. Knapp's demonstration plan a thorough trial.

"Mr. W. C. Porter, a prominent farmer near Terrell, was agreed upon as an ideal man to make the demonstration, but he was not willing to follow any one's instructions in growing cotton unless guaranteed against loss. The business men promptly made him an indemnity bond, and he then planted and cultivated 40 acres of cotton under Dr. Knapp's instruction.

"In the fall this demonstration showed a net profit of over \$700. This demonstration was of inestimable value in restoring confidence in that section and in proving that cotton could be grown profitably under weevil conditions.

"As soon as Congress granted the weevil emergency appropriation Dr. Knapp was authorized to go to Texas and carry out his plan of farm demonstration work, and in January, 1904, he established his headquarters at Houston.

"Dr. Knapp was one of the few men in the South at that time who fully appreciated the fact that the boll weevil was not the sole cause of the trouble, but that it lay further back, and consisted in a wrong system of agriculture that must be changed before permanent relief could be expected.

"With his great faith in humanity and his knowledge of men, he did not hesitate to undertake the task of revolutionizing the whole system of southern agriculture.

"His first steps were to organize a working force and secure the coöperation of the general public.

"The losses suffered by the business interests made them willing and anxious to coöperate in any movement at all likely to better conditions, so when he sent out his call for help it was responded to by railroads, commercial bodies, the colleges, and private individuals from all parts of Texas.

"Money, trains, and speakers were placed at his command, and the crusade was on.

"The call came to me over the telephone on the 17th day of February, 1904, as I was at work on my farm in Clay County. That night I boarded the private car of the vice president of the Fort Worth & Denver Railroad, with little knowledge of the work being undertaken or what would be expected of me.

"In the morning I learned I was with an agricultural lecture train, managed by the railroad to arouse public interest and to secure the coöperation of the farmers. For two weeks meetings were held at all the leading towns in the cotton-growing counties through which that road runs.

"Farmers' institutes were organized at each point. Lectures were given on cotton, cotton insects, corn, forage crops, fruit growing, and other farm topics.

"Attempts were made to secure a list of farmers who would try the department's new plan of teaching agriculture by the 5 and 10 acre demonstration plat method. Only a few names were secured, and most of them were town people who expected to do the work by proxy.

"I doubt very much if any of the speakers who accompanied that train had a very clear idea of the proposed demonstration plan or had much faith in it.

"The hardest work we had the first year was in getting the confidence of the farmers. I soon learned to begin by telling my prospective demonstrator that I was a farmer; that my farm was a sandy-land farm like his, or not like his, as the case might be. As soon as it seemed safe to do so, I presented the demonstration proposition and sought his coöperation. Very often when he found out that I was a Government agent, he drove on and left me. Later I joined the farmers' union and after that had better success.

"During the first year over a thousand farmers' meet-

ings were held, where Dr. Knapp or some of his assistants made addresses. Something over 7,000 farmers pledged themselves to cultivate a few acres under the supervision of Dr. Knapp and his agents. Enough of these were successful to give us plenty of argument for the 1905 campaign.

"In the fall of 1904 a meeting of agents and over 200 representative farmers from all parts of Texas was held at Houston, at which many reports were made, showing the profits of crops grown under demonstration methods, compared with those under ordinary methods.

"During those first years of the work all the agents followed the practice of holding meetings of farmers in courthouses, schoolhouses, on the streets, and wherever they could be gotten together. Pure seed, deep plowing, frequent shallow cultivation, and the growing of all home supplies were the chief topics discussed at these meetings.

"It was easier to secure demonstrations in 1905 and 1906 than in 1904. As the work gradually became more systematized and more effective it became more and more popular.

"Under the guidance of the master mind, these annual agents' meetings took more the nature of religious conferences than formal business meetings. We were brought to see and understand that the work we were engaged in was deeper, broader, and more far-reaching than simply the ravages of the boll weevil.

"We were brought by degrees to see and understand the great possibilities for making people better, happier, and more prosperous through the demonstration method of teaching agriculture.

"The farmers' coöperative demonstration work had proven that by following the cultural methods advocated cotton could be profitably grown with the weevil present and confidence and prosperity would follow. It had also proven that the demonstration method of teaching agri-

culture was the best and most effective plan ever attempted of reaching and helping the farmer to higher and better things."

In commenting on Dr. Knapp's work, Mr. Clarence Poe, editor of the *Progressive Farmer*, emphasizes the importance of the development of the demonstration method of teaching, in the following words: "I still maintain that Dr. Knapp made one of the greatest of original contributions to agricultural science in that he discovered not simply a new agricultural truth, but a new way of disseminating all the vast treasures of truth which others had developed. Grant that in learning from him the small farmer heard only what other men had been saying for 40 years; the point is that they had been crying in the wilderness of ineffectuality while Dr. Knapp actually reached the ear and the heart of the man behind the plow. He actually carried the message to Garcia. If the agricultural principles he taught were not new, it was new to think of going to the farmer and 'demonstrating' their practicability and potency before his very eyes. And so it is the glory of Dr. Knapp not that he added another dry agricultural principle to human knowledge, but that for a great body of people under the power of his organization, all formerly dry agricultural principles became live and potent as did the dry bones in Ezekiel's Valley when the spirit of the Lord brought bone to bone and clothed them with miraculous flesh and sinew."

The farm demonstration in the early history of such work usually consisted of from one to ten acres on which the farmer, with his own labor and entirely at his own expense, undertook to grow some particular crop under

the agent's careful supervision. A careful account was kept and a report made at the end of the season. The agents were required to arrange for as many demonstrations as they could properly supervise.

In 1906 Smith County, Texas, provided county funds to contribute toward the salary of a demonstrator and W. C. Stallings was definitely assigned to that county. Thus, properly speaking, Smith County, Texas, bears the distinction of having had the first "county agent."

In 1907, Anderson, Harrison, and Smith counties in Texas and De Soto and Webster Parishes in Louisiana, all contributed toward the salaries of these agents of the Department of Agriculture and each of the counties mentioned was assigned an individual agent. The work was intensified and the character of demonstrations enlarged to include all the standard farm crops, gardens, pastures, and later the breeding, raising, and feeding of livestock. Gradually the work throughout the South was changed over to the county basis, many states passed laws authorizing the county commissioners to contribute to the "county demonstrator's" salary and expenses, and by 1912, a total of 858 field agents of this type were employed, all in the Southern states. Of these, 13 were State Agents, 36 District Supervisory Agents, 20 Special Corn Club Agents, 639 local County Agents, and 159 collaborating agents assisting in girls canning and poultry club work.¹

¹ Practically from the beginning of the demonstration work Dr. Knapp received funds from the General Education Board of the Rockefeller Foundation. This amount was increased year by year until the annual contribution amounted to \$660,000. Considerable criticism of the source and motive involved in this donation having arisen, Congress, in 1914, appropriated a sum sufficient to relieve the Department of Agriculture from further necessity of accepting this donation.

The success of this demonstration method of teaching was, of course, noted in the North and soon a start was made along similar lines but with certain important modifications.

The office of Farm Management of the Bureau of Plant Industry of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, had been conducting survey work in the North and West under the direction of Dr. W. J. Spillman for several years. In fact, Dr. Spillman had had general supervision of Dr. Knapp's work in the South. The agents sent out to conduct these investigations of better farming methods throughout the North and West frequently confined their efforts to limited areas for considerable periods of time and coöperated with the agricultural authorities of whatever state they might be working in.

Soon these men found themselves in demand for institute lectures and special demonstrations and were often asked by individual farmers or groups of farmers to assist in solving local farming problems. As this work developed more men were assigned and soon the aim was to have one man for every 25,000 farms.

Encouraged by the excellent results secured in the South it was an easy step to the next development—the assigning of a man to a separate county. But there was another most interesting incident, or succession of incidents, which took place at about this time which did much to give county agent work a start in the North.

About the year 1907, a young corporation lawyer in Cleveland named A. B. Ross found to his dismay that he had been pushing his work to the point where his health was endangered. His physician told him that his nervous system was shattered and recommended that he go off into some quiet, mountainous country, get a

horse and buckboard, and spend several years in relaxation and quiet, out in the open air.

Ross bethought himself of his childhood home among the foothills and valleys of the Cumberland Mountains, in Bedford County, Pennsylvania—not far from the Maryland line. There he followed his doctor's advice assiduously. His buckboard became a familiar sight among those hills, threading its way in and out among the narrow valleys and following the borders of the highland plateaus. Craving companionship and prompted by a keenly inquiring mind, he usually spent a part of his day talking with the farmers he met and asked an interminable lot of questions. Whenever a farmer thereabouts saw a buckboard drive up to the roadside and a rather tall, medium weight, quietly dressed man jump out and come limping across the field he knew that he would have to answer all sorts of questions about corn and cows and cut worm and cockle burrs and crab apples and anything else along agricultural lines that might happen to have attracted Ross's attention.

But the farmers soon got to liking Ross and his questions. He seemed so absolutely sincere and hungry for knowledge. Soon, too, they found that he could bring them bits of valuable information now and then. Just how Farmer Jones, over on the other side of the ridge, had saved his cow that had milk fever; or how Farmer Brown, in the adjoining township, grew the finest crop of clover to be seen in the county; or what Farmer Smith did to kill the codling moth, was all very interesting news and very welcome information.

Ross was much troubled to learn that the average corn yield was only 10 or 12 bushels to the acre. He found that while they had formerly grown clover, this was now

no longer possible and the crop had been practically abandoned. There were many small orchards in the county but no one sprayed and the dealers usually came in and took the fruit at about \$1.25 per barrel. Ross thought he ought to be able to put his time to good use in helping these people. He sent to the Department of Agriculture at Washington and got some bulletins. These he studied carefully and in the course of a year or two he took to "translating them into United States" as he said, and at his own expense mimeographed and distributed copies among the farmers. Later he bought some improved seed corn and gave it to farmers who would agree to grow it according to certain directions.

The people of Bedford County called Ross a crank but, nevertheless, came to him more and more for advice and help. At that time Ross was trying to get legumes to grow and was experimenting with "inoculation." Inoculation was then looked upon as more or less of a fake—even by many agricultural scientists. But Ross grew excellent clover where he inoculated and practically none at all where he didn't inoculate. That was evidence rather difficult to set aside and the Department of Agriculture, still skeptical, finally sent a man to look over Ross's experiments.

The demands upon Ross grew heavier and heavier and, lawyer like, Ross went to Washington and called upon the head of every bureau or division in the Department of Agriculture, putting up to each the question, "What can your division do to help the farmers of Bedford County?"

Finally Ross ran into Dr. Spillman, who as already mentioned had been gradually coming to the conclusion that an agent in each county was the ultimate solution of the better farming problem. Dr. Spillman was in a

most receptive mood that day and as Ross related his experiences the resolve came to him to make a definite tryout of the county agent idea. So when Ross came to his inevitable question "What can you do?" Dr. Spillman was ready with, "How would you like to go on the payroll of the Department, coöperate with us through our specialists, receiving in addition to a nominal salary your expenses and the franking privilege?"

This was almost too much for Ross. It was so much more than he had expected in the way of assistance. But he managed to accept and so the deal was closed. The word "camouflage" had not yet been imported at that time, but the art was known nevertheless and by its use Dr. Spillman secured the necessary funds to finance the project.

On March 1, 1910, Mr. A. B. Ross took up his duties as the first regularly constituted county agricultural agent in the Northern states.¹ The work went forward with new vigor and soon Ross had a stenographer as busy as himself. In order to cover more ground the buckboard was displaced by a small automobile which before long acquired throughout the entire county the peculiar but significant nickname "the manure spreader." When questioned as to the reason for this nickname most any farmer would reply: "Why that thing is raising the yield of corn all over this county." Ross kept up the work for two years when the pressure became so strong that his health was again threatened and he was forced to resign.

On March 20, 1911, John H. Barron, a graduate of Cornell University, went to work in Broome County, New

¹ It will be noted that the county demonstrators then at work in the South were on a somewhat different basis both as to financing and as to supervision and duties.

York, as County Agent. While Mr. Barron cannot claim the distinction of being the first County Agent he may lay claim to being the first "farm bureau" representative in the United States. The epoch-making development which took place in Broome County will be treated in Chapter VII.

But the movement for County Agents in the North and West was not confined to this one outlet. The idea seemed to burst forth at several points almost simultaneously. On April 15th, 1912, Sam M. Jordan, better known as the "apostle of agriculture," took a year's leave of absence from the Missouri Board of Agriculture and went to work in Pettis County, Missouri, as "County Farm Advisor" and Manager of the Pettis County "Bureau of Agriculture." Just how this plan was put into operation we relate in Mr. Jordan's own words:

"Some time in March, 1912, we were holding an institute in Sedalia and the president and secretary of the Sedalia Boosters' Club were present and listened to the addresses, and were especially impressed by the questions asked by the farmers and their anxiety for information. On their returning to the club rooms they concluded that 'Pettis County needs these men not for a day or two in the year, but we need them all the year.' As a result of this conclusion, they called the writer and asked him to come up to the club rooms, and in a short time the objects of the 'call' were made known, and they asked me if I would consider a proposition to put in my entire time in Pettis County, to which I made reply that I would think it over. I made a hurried survey of the possibilities of what a person in such a position may do and of its ultimate results, and knowing of a nation-wide movement in this same direction, I gave a tentative proposition, that if accepted, I would ask for a leave of absence from

the position I held with the State and would give the matter a trial. These conclusions were all reached within a very few hours, and these men called a meeting of the executive committee of the Boosters' Club to consider the matter, and, as a result a subscription list was started, and within a few days I received a telegram that the money was provided and my services were wanted from April 12, 1912, for one year."¹

The funds for this work were raised from several sources. The county court took advantage of a law which seemed to give them the authority and voted \$1,500 for the work. The Sedalia school board arranged to pay Jordan \$600 in consideration of one lecture a week before the high school. The remaining \$900 was raised by private subscription from farmers and business men. In addition an office was furnished. Advantage was taken of an offer made by a large Chicago mail order house² to donate \$1,000 for the work. Subsequently the Department of Agriculture of the University of Missouri and still later the U. S. Department of Agriculture contributed.

One of the most interesting features of this development was the organization and incorporation of the "Bureau of Agriculture." So far as is known this was the first ever so organized. The plans provided for forty members of the corporate body, two representatives from each township, and the six officers. In addition there was a working committee of three for each school district. Three honor committees were also arranged for, as follows: "The Soil Builders, in which membership is lim-

¹ *Monthly Bulletin*, Missouri State Board of Agriculture, January, 1913.

² Sears, Roebuck and Company at one time offered \$1,000 to every county that would employ a County Agent. It is said that approximately \$60,000 was used in this way.

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ited to those farmers who can say that by their systems of farming they are making the soil more fertile; the Good Stockmen, open only to farmers using none but pure-bred sires in their livestock operations; and the Road Builders, in which any farmer who drags the roads is entitled to membership."

By 1913 the "County Demonstrator" was becoming a somewhat more familiar sight throughout the territory and the vast possibilities of the innovation were beginning to be realized. An editorial in the *Breeder's Gazette* in January, 1913, gives an interesting sidelight upon the attitude toward the movement at that time.

"There is something new in the land. A man, clad with no authority to compel, but armed with a knowledge of good farm practices, goes about his county counseling this man and that to reform his ways, to forsake his slipshod and erroneous farm practices, feel a change of heart and help in the great movement for farm uplift. This man is the new county demonstrator.

"In rich counties, such as we see in Illinois, he is provided with automobile¹ and stenographer, he has his office in the court house whence daily he sallies out on missions of good import. Elsewhere he goes in vehicle or on horseback; the principle is the same. He is a man supposedly full of good practical ideas, and it is his mission to so modify the farming of his county that he will have earned his salary and a great deal more.

¹The place of the automobile, particularly of the smaller type, in the development of agriculture both from a business and from a social and intellectual standpoint, must not be underestimated. It has been one of the most powerful factors in the accelerated development of agriculture in the past decade. One third of all the cars in 1920 were located in the country or in country towns of 1,000 population or less. In Iowa there was an average of one machine for every five persons in the entire state.

“This year will see installed into office a good many of these county demonstrators, from the eastern edge of the corn belt to the Rockies and to the Gulf of Mexico. A reader asks us what we think of the plan.

“We think it depends chiefly upon the man selected. There are some men who can command confidence, respect, and obedience. It is a tremendous undertaking, this idea of a demonstrator going into a county, perhaps strange to him, to study its soils, crops, animals, men, women, children, to have visions and faith to plan out better ways, not merely temporarily better ways, but permanently better ones. It needs a man with a lot of agricultural science, a thorough grounding in agricultural practice, an economist, a preacher, an exhorter, a man of patience, faith, hope, and kindling enthusiasm. When you see such a man as that going down the road, whether in automobile or afoot, stop him, pull him in, let the children and the wife meet him. Are there such men? Assuredly there are. The editor has known three or four in his day.

“We have seen men undertake this office of county demonstrator who had not deep convictions regarding correct agricultural practice, nor the abiding faith and enthusiasm needed to impart desire for good practice in others. These men drew their pay, visited about the neighborhood, ate good farm dinners, and went contentedly back to their offices in the county seats, having in no way helped a single man. There are many more such men than of the other sort. It is worse than a waste of money to employ such a man; it is putting good farming into disrepute, makes the man in the rut laugh and remain contentedly in the rut. It is all in the man. Get a man. If you cannot find the man, wait. Our agricultural colleges will help us some day. They are training ¹

¹In 1912 there were 12,462 white students enrolled in regular college courses in agriculture. In 1916 the number had risen to

a lot of good, practical farm boys, who know theories and practices as well. Get a good man or none."

During the fiscal year 1911-12 five County Agents were appointed in the North and West, including the one in Broome County, New York, of which more will be said later. During 1912-13, 113 and in 1913-14, 90 were appointed. On May 8, 1914, the Smith-Lever Bill was passed by Congress and agricultural extension work in all its phases was given a powerful forward impulse.

The passage of the Smith-Lever¹ Bill was an epoch-making event in agricultural development. It made available the funds necessary for the rapid extension of the County Agent system into every agricultural county of the nation. C. W. Pugsley, of the University of Nebraska, said: "When President Woodrow Wilson signed House Roll 7951, on May 8, 1914, he paved the way for the beginning of a new era in agricultural extension." J. D. McVean, of the North Carolina Experiment Station, expressed his estimate of the worth of the Act in these words: "The funds rendered available to North Carolina as a result of the Smith-Lever law² are a Godsend to

16,409. In 1912, 1,384 students received the degree of Bachelor of Science in Agriculture; by 1916 the number had more than doubled, a total of 2,803 receiving the degree in that year.

¹Developed and fathered by Representative Asbury F. Lever of South Carolina, and introduced in the Senate by Senator Hoke Smith of Georgia.

²The Smith-Lever Act provided an annual appropriation of \$10,000 for each state, plus an additional sum of \$600,000 for the first year and a further addition of \$300,000 for each year thereafter for seven years, same to be divided among the states on the basis of their relative rural population in the census of 1910. After the expiration of this arrangement, i. e., in 1922, the sum of \$4,100,000, in addition to the annual \$10,000 for each State, is to be distributed among the various states. The proviso was made, however, that before receiving any of these funds the various state legislatures should appropriate an equal amount.

the agricultural classes, and through them to all the people."

Dean Davenport, of the Illinois Agricultural College, said: "The passage of the Lever Bill, therefore, will not only insure the highest possible application of new principles and practices but it will free the experiment stations from the overburdening demand for demonstration work, leaving them at liberty to prosecute research into still further unknown fields."

"One of the greatest agricultural acts ever passed and one that will eventually revolutionize farming methods—is the way we look at the Smith-Lever Extension Act in Iowa," said P. C. Taft, in charge of extension work in that state.

In testifying in support of the Lever Bill before the House Committee on Agriculture, Dr. W. O. Thompson, president of Ohio State University, and at that time chairman of the executive committee of the association of land-grant colleges, pointed out the need for more intensive and systematic extension work in the following words:

"There are two kinds of farmers—those who want things and those who do not. Those who want things are usually the progressive farmers who have caught the spirit of the farmers' institutes and the experiment station and the agricultural college and the general newspaper agitation, and believe in better things; so that they have invested their labor and their time in drainage, in fertilizer, in pure-bred livestock, in crop rotation farming and whatever else will improve their condition.

"They have demonstrated to themselves the value of those things. You do not need to go to those men very much. They are up to date as to methods, but they are

the small majority in every township or district in the country. Then there is a large inert mass of farmers who have not yet responded and have not recognized their own needs and therefore have not formulated their wants. These progressive farmers of the country (in the room) are here in the interest of the people who have not yet responded,¹ and are asking that these methods be extended so as to reach the farmers in general and improve their condition throughout the entire country. This bill does not propose to relieve the states of their duty nor relieve the states of their responsibility in the matter; it only proposes to give them a little stimulus to meet an opportunity."

Another commentator of the day points out the very important fact that owing to the provision of the Smith-Lever Act which requires that all extension projects be approved by the States Relations Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, the effect would be to unify and systematize extension work. He says: "The results of all this will be that the sporadic, enthusiastic efforts of days gone by will be eliminated and there will result a coördination in the near future."

With the new funds thus made available and the new enthusiasm engendered, the conquest of the County Agent was rapid and complete. County after county met the local requirements and the state extension department provided a man to act as agent, representing jointly the county, the state agricultural college, and the U. S. Department of Agriculture. By January 1, 1915, there were approximately one thousand County Agricultural

¹In 1914 the head of the agricultural extension work of Cornell University estimated that they had reached effectively only about one-tenth of the rural population in that state.

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Agents employed in demonstration work in the United States.¹

Those in the South still adhered rather closely to the original demonstration methods but those in the North soon modified these methods somewhat and as we shall see, developed a distinctive type of organization to serve as a vehicle through which to carry their message to the people. These organizations differed in plan in almost every state and were known by a variety of names. There were, however, four principal types.²

(1) Those having a central organization with a representative membership of farmers scattered generally throughout the county and paying an annual membership fee of from one to ten dollars. Associations of this type usually held meetings annually and had a board of directors as an executive committee for carrying forward the business of the organization, and an advisory council or other group of elected or appointed officials, who met at stated intervals, usually monthly, to consult with the County Agent in regard to the conduct of his work.

¹The distribution was as follows:

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|----|-------------------|----|-------------------|----|
| Alabama | 65 | Maryland | 9 | Oklahoma | 51 |
| Arizona | 2 | Massachusetts ... | 8 | Oregon | 10 |
| Arkansas | 47 | Michigan | 12 | Pennsylvania ... | 14 |
| California | 9 | Minnesota | 25 | Rhode Island.... | 1 |
| Connecticut | 1 | Mississippi | 39 | S. Carolina..... | 39 |
| Delaware | 1 | Missouri | 12 | S. Dakota..... | 3 |
| Florida | 34 | Montana | 5 | Tennessee | 31 |
| Georgia | 59 | Nebraska | 6 | Texas | 81 |
| Idaho | 3 | New Hampshire.. | 2 | Utah | 7 |
| Illinois | 12 | New Jersey..... | 4 | Vermont | 8 |
| Indiana | 28 | New Mexico..... | 4 | Virginia | 55 |
| Iowa | 9 | New York..... | 23 | Washington | 9 |
| Kansas | 3 | N. Carolina..... | 63 | West Virginia.... | 23 |
| Kentucky | 30 | N. Dakota..... | 15 | Wisconsin | 9 |
| Louisiana | 37 | Ohio | 7 | Wyoming | 3 |

² States Relations Service, Circular No. 1. By W. A. Lloyd.

Many of the organizations of this type were incorporated.

(2) Those having a central organization made up of delegates from township groups or other subordinate units. These local groups usually met monthly and discussed matters of community interest, the County Agent being present whenever possible. The central or delegate organization met usually on the call of the president whenever there was important business to transact.

(3) Those having a central organization made up of delegates elected from various rural organizations already in the county, such as farmers' clubs, granges, farmers' union, gleaners, the equity, etc. Such an organization was sometimes called a county federation. The various associations held their regular independent meetings and the federation committee which made up the central association met at stated intervals or on call of the president and exercised the functions of the advisory council as in plan Number 1.

(4) Dissociated farmers' clubs without a central organization, through which the agent extends his work.

In a few cases the county board of commissioners or supervisors constituted the central organization, and in a few others an agricultural committee of a local Chamber of Commerce has been a coöperating body.

In the Southern States what were known as County Councils of Agriculture were developed. These more nearly resembled type Number 3, but had some points of difference.

The fundamental purpose of all these forms of organization was the same; namely, to bring together a number of interested people with whom the County Agent could

work directly in planning projects to be undertaken and through whom he could multiply his efforts and spread his teachings. They were the public spirited citizens, the leaders, who gave freely of their time and money to promote the public welfare. The County Agent needed such a body of representative farmers back of him more for their moral support than for their financial assistance, yet they usually contributed no small part to his salary and running expenses.

Experience soon showed the organization flaws, however, and it was not long before most of the county organizations in the North and West were modeled after either plan Number 1 or plan Number 2 indicated above.

This chapter would be unfinished without some estimate of the value of the results accomplished for agriculture by the County Agent, and without some tribute to the tremendous energy and enthusiasm which these virile, vigorous young men—nearly all farm reared and graduates of agricultural colleges—threw into this great work which has virtually transformed the farm. A condensed summarized report of one year's demonstration work will perhaps serve this purpose.

The table on page 92 gives only a few of the more important lines of demonstration work together with an estimate of results secured. The figures showing profits are those resulting directly from the demonstrations and do not attempt to measure the values accruing from the spread of their influence.

In connection with demonstrations and in attending to details of the work the county agents made, in 1919, 510,000 farm visits, or an average of about 450 per agent. A total of 1,412,200 visits to the county agents' offices were made by farmers during the year, in addition

RESULTS OF DEMONSTRATION WORK OF COUNTY
AGRICULTURAL AGENTS, 1919¹

| Name of demonstration. | Number of demonstrations. | Number of meetings at demonstrations. | Total attendance at meetings. | Total profit on demonstrations due to increase. |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Corn, general | 2,785 | 728 | 10,723 | \$370,905 |
| Corn, seed selection..... | 1,248 | 541 | 9,497 | 192,885 |
| Corn, seed testing..... | 229 | 44 | 1,769 | 103,720 |
| Corn, silage | 747 | 96 | 929 | 19,978 |
| Wheat, general | 821 | 230 | 3,583 | 165,310 |
| Wheat, varieties | 1,685 | 87 | 1,382 | 237,086 |
| Wheat, smut control..... | 1,690 | 731 | 14,813 | 381,885 |
| Oats, general | 183 | 15 | 786 | 14,094 |
| Oats, varieties | 360 | 57 | 668 | 9,122 |
| Oats, smut control..... | 3,492 | 1,361 | 26,076 | 863,220 |
| Potatoes, general | 3,161 | 1,037 | 10,832 | 229,968 |
| Potatoes, disease control... | 1,715 | 649 | 11,978 | 249,855 |
| Beans | 189 | 19 | 420 | 12,608 |
| Alfalfa | 2,800 | 306 | 5,670 | 274,843 |
| Clover; red, alsike, white.. | 352 | 90 | 1,032 | 86,500 |
| Sweet clover..... | 620 | 69 | 1,301 | 83,240 |
| Soy beans | 2,344 | 314 | 5,251 | 1,780,749 |
| Orchards | 3,914 | 2,558 | 49,315 | 552,996 |
| Gardens | 13 | 2 | 75 | |
| Cow testing for production. | 660 | 472 | 3,637 | 71,697 |
| Feeding | 1,271 | 481 | 23,440 | 144,638 |
| Silos | 352 | 157 | 2,223 | 32,012 |
| Blackleg control | 2,801 | 1,563 | 11,624 | 287,313 |
| Hog-cholera control | 3,185 | 1,856 | 15,371 | 1,046,451 |
| Poultry | 2,419 | 1,567 | 28,084 | 149,205 |
| Poultry culling | 4,541 | 3,785 | 77,634 | 440,687 |
| Drainage | 776 | 347 | 7,290 | 354,848 |
| Irrigation | 92 | 40 | 1,185 | 26,446 |
| Fertilizers | 3,259 | 622 | 11,402 | 367,347 |
| Lime and limestone..... | 3,545 | 397 | 13,626 | 140,129 |
| Purchasing and marketing.. | 1,388 | 508 | 16,678 | 728,801 |
| Rodent and animal pests... | 6,423 | 1,578 | 27,746 | 3,336,337 |
| Insect pests | 4,859 | 1,235 | 26,317 | 6,558,717 |
| Weeds | 224 | 52 | 2,048 | 18,750 |
| Sunflowers | 413 | 57 | 1,148 | 25,679 |
| Bees | 413 | 277 | 5,144 | 11,845 |
| Total | 64,969 | 23,928 | 430,687 | 19,358,021 |

¹ U. S. Dept. of Agriculture, Dept. Circular No. 106. By W. A. Lloyd.

to the uncounted thousands of telephone calls. The county agents held 81,156 meetings with a total attendance of 3,580,000 people. Half a million farmers coöperated in actual demonstrations. During the year 148,110 agricultural articles were written for the rural papers, nearly two million original letters were sent to farms and more than eight million circular letters were used by the county agents in reaching the farmers of their respective counties.

PART II

THE FARM BUREAU MAKES ITS APPEARANCE

CHAPTER VII

THE FIRST FARM BUREAU

WE are next to note the development of a new principle and a new institution in American agriculture. Since the origin, purpose and underlying motives of the local farm bureau have much to do with all that follows, it is necessary to outline its earlier history in some detail.

In 1909 Secretary of Agriculture James Wilson made a tour of New York State and upon his return to Washington announced that he had been greatly impressed by the number of so-called abandoned farms seen, particularly in the southern part of the state. This statement came to the attention of Mr. Byers H. Gitchell, then secretary of the Binghamton Chamber of Commerce, and confirmed his own growing belief that it would be an excellent idea for his organization to devote more attention to the welfare of the agricultural sections tributary to Binghamton. In 1910 Mr. Gitchell started an agitation with that end in view.

What actuated Mr. Gitchell, and later his associates, was a realization of the fact that farming is the basic in-

dustry, and that no urban community depending upon the trade of the rural territory surrounding it can long prosper unless the region that feeds it is also prosperous. They likewise realized that no nation can continue to prosper unless agriculture thrives.

In his campaign to arouse the Chamber of Commerce to the needs of the hour, Mr. Gitchell was aided by a fortunate circumstance. The report of President Roosevelt's Country Life Commission had just appeared, and it contained facts and figures emphasizing the need for action.

The Chamber appointed a committee on agriculture and a tour of Broome and contiguous counties was arranged. Participating in this reconnaissance, which was later to mean so much to American agriculture, were members of the Chamber, representatives from the New York State College of Agriculture, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the New York State Department of Agriculture.

The committee learned many useful things from this tour. The agricultural experts in the party were able to point out certain deficiencies in methods on many farms that were limiting returns. Other farms were visited where work was being done in a way worthy of imitation by others. The party returned home convinced that the time was ripe for some one to take the initiative in opening to all farmers the opportunities presented through modern science and practice of agriculture.

Meanwhile a few progressive farmers of the county, grateful that a city organization should be so far-sighted as to visualize a situation they had long been aware of, had taken out membership in the Binghamton Chamber of Commerce.

George A. Cullen, at that time traffic manager and industrial agent of the Lackawanna Railroad, chanced to attend a meeting at Binghamton at the time this general plan of assisting in the development of agriculture was discussed, and the idea struck him most favorably. He pledged the coöperation of his road in any plan that might be devised. Mr. Cullen and two farmer members of the Chamber were added to the agricultural committee which soon came to be known as a "bureau" in the Chamber of Commerce.

The question as to just what plan of procedure should be undertaken occasioned much discussion. Several members of the committee favored the establishment of a demonstration farm which could serve as an object lesson in good farming. Finally it was decided that expert advice was needed and Mr. Cullen went to Washington to consult with Dr. W. J. Spillman of the United States Department of Agriculture.

Dr. Spillman discouraged the demonstration farm idea, pointing out that he had already tried some thirty of these farms throughout the country and that 29 of them had been practically failures. Dr. Spillman called attention to the good work being done by "county demonstrators" in the southern states, and with the success of Mr. Ross in Bedford County, Pennsylvania, fresh in mind, strongly recommended that this plan be tried in Broome County.

This idea appealed to the committee and they decided to follow Dr. Spillman's advice. Funds were provided coöperatively by the Binghamton Chamber of Commerce, the United States Department of Agriculture, and the Lackawanna Railroad. The New York State College of Agriculture agreed to give educational assistance. John H. Barron, a graduate of the state agricultural college

was engaged as County Agent and began his work on March 20, 1911.

It will be noted that while Mr. Ross had been at work as County Agent of Bedford County, Pennsylvania, for nearly a year previous to the advent of Mr. Barron, yet the former was working on practically an independent, free-lance basis, while the latter had a local governing, consulting, and coöperating body. Thus the credit for the first farm bureau belongs to Broome County. It is true that Mr. Barron's organization bears little resemblance to the present day farm bureau, but the principle of local control and local responsibility was established.

Soon Mr. Barron discovered that it was practically impossible to cover with any regularity the fifty-mile radius assigned to him, and both as a means of extending his work and as a way of intensifying interest he appointed community chairmen. This was the second big step in establishing the local organization idea, and, it will be noted, was developed purely as a means of making the County Agent's work more effective. Mr. Barron also utilized such organizations as he found ready-made, the Grange, in particular, becoming his staunch supporter.

The work went forward vigorously in Broome County on this basis and in the next year or two the County Agent became a fixture in many other states of the East and Middle West. In the South, too, the work of the County Demonstrators changed in character somewhat and what were known as County Councils of Agriculture were formed. Agricultural leaders everywhere realized that they were now in the midst of a great movement and that the best thought and best efforts must be given to guide the development into safe and sane channels. At that period the movement was entirely in the hands of the

state and national agricultural extension forces, with such aid and assistance as Chambers of Commerce, banks, and other large commercial organizations saw fit to give. Farmers themselves had practically nothing to do with the directing of policies.

West Virginia was one of the first states to see the necessity of enlisting the farmer's active support in this work and to arrange for his actual participation. Before a County Agent was placed in a county, the local farmers were called together and required to pledge a certain amount of money toward his support. They were required to take out memberships (at one dollar each) in a "county farm bureau" which was to elect officers from its own ranks, solicit more members, assist the County Agent in working out a set of demonstration "projects," and in general to cooperate with the County Agent in every way possible. Since more members meant more funds to work with and greater interest throughout the county, membership campaigns were pushed and the County Agent frequently took an active part in this work.

New York State developed along practically the same lines and at the same time. In several states laws were passed authorizing the county courts or county Boards of Supervisors to make appropriations for farm improvement work, to be spent under the direction of the farm bureau. In New York such a law was passed in 1912 and soon thereafter the Broome County Board of Supervisors, with but one dissenting vote, made an appropriation of \$1,000. In the New York counties organized following the initial installation, the plan of having local farmer membership and control was inaugurated and proved so satisfactory that in October, 1914, the

Broome County organization also went over to that basis. Mr. James Quinn, then the Master of the Broome County Pomona Grange, was elected president.

Evidence of the fact that the original plan of organization in Broome County as a bureau in the Chamber of Commerce was not satisfactory, is found in the fact that on October 10, 1913, a county-wide meeting of farmers was held and the "Farm Improvement Association of Broome County" organized. The following year this organization took over the responsibilities and assumed the name of the Broome County Farm Bureau. The friendly relations with and coöperation of the Chamber of Commerce were continued but thenceforth the farmers controlled their own affairs in so far as local matters were concerned. The County Agent was, of course, jointly responsible to the state college of agriculture, also, since the state and Federal funds made available through the Smith-Lever Law, enacted in 1912, were administered by the college.

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CHAPTER VIII

THE GROWTH OF AN IDEA

SATISFACTORY basic principles of organization and purpose once worked out, progress throughout the nation was comparatively rapid. Most of the states of the East and of the Middle West and a few of the far Western states adopted the county farm bureau idea, first in a more or less experimental way and then more rapidly after the Smith-Lever funds became available in 1914. In most states the sole limiting factor was the impossibility of securing properly trained men capable of serving as County Agents. It soon became the general plan in most states for the state extension forces of the College of Agriculture to assist in organizing a county even before a County Agent could be found, and then later when a prospective Agent became available, to give the local farm bureau the opportunity to accept or refuse the candidate. This was one more distinct step toward local control.

It was, however, the emergency of the World War that brought the farm bureau and the County Agent to full stature as aids to agriculture.

"Food will win the war" was the message sent out by our struggling Allies across the sea. The cry was taken up in the United States and made to reëcho on every farm. Agriculture took on a new importance. It became apparent that even shells and explosives would be useless



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION, 1921

From left to right—Jas. W. Morton, John F. Burton, J. R. Howard, Howard Leonard, O. E. Brad-

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
ASTOR, LENOX
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

without a surplus of bread and meat to send to the firing line. The Government turned to the question of maximum food production determined, if necessary, to organize each farming district just as it had organized for ship production or for munitions making. It was realized that some means must be devised to reach quickly every community and every individual farmer and to organize these individuals in such a way as to produce the most effective results. And then to its delight the Government found ready-made and in perfect working order this almost ideal system of organization made up of county farm bureaus, each with its technically trained leader and advisor.

Under the Emergency Food Production Act, passed August 14, 1917, more funds were supplied in order to extend the County Agent system as rapidly as possible and to employ assistant County Agents in the more important counties. In Ohio, Wisconsin, Montana, and several other states, members of the agricultural college staffs were released from their regular duties and assigned to counties as emergency agents. Temporary assistants to the state County Agent leaders were appointed in some states to assist in educating the public to the necessity of organizing farm bureaus and obtaining County Agents, some of the most effective work in this line being done by practical farmers who were themselves officers of existing farm bureaus. The campaign for increased food production was waged early and late and with a measure of success for which our Allies have since had due reason to thank us fervently.

The number of County Agents in the North and West jumped from 542 on July 1, 1917, to 1133 on June 30, 1918. The increase in farm bureaus during this same

period was from 516 to 791. The individual membership in the various county farm bureaus totaled approximately 290,000 at that time. The membership fee was generally one dollar.

The experiences of the war had shown more clearly than ever the mutual interdependence of the local farm bureau and the County Agent. The various states, including some that had hesitated, accepted the farm bureau plan and set about fitting it into the permanent scheme of things.

One of the important problems the agricultural colleges were early called upon to face in connection with the development of farm bureaus was the question of control. As long as the Federal and state funds contributed to the support of a County Agent more or less independent of a local organization, the agent was very definitely under the control of the college and this fact added materially to the power and prestige of that institution. Even with weak county organizations contributing but slightly to the funds and acting principally in an advisory and coöperating capacity, the college could retain control. But if the policy of deliberately strengthening and upbuilding these county units was to be adopted, it was easy to foresee a time when the County Agent would be largely controlled and directed by the local bureau and the college would act in simply an advisory capacity.

Dean L. H. Bailey, one of the pioneers in this movement, expressed his views along this line as early as 1914, in the following language:

“Administration follows funds. As a rule, the sources of these funds will determine the character of the con-

trol. In this State (New York), the funds are derived in part from the Federal Government, in part from the State, in part from the localities, and in part from outside sources. If the Farm Bureaus establish themselves and become more effective, the appropriation of local funds will gradually and prominently increase. This will more and more place the control of the Farm Bureau in the hands of the people, for they will manage it from among themselves.

"However, there should be some uniformity of management within the State and also within the nation; and the larger methods and relations should be standardized. This means that somewhere and somehow there must be useful supervision. Even if the Farm Bureau were supported wholly by local funds, nevertheless it would be greatly to the interest of that Bureau to place itself within the State plan so that it might have the benefit of advisory oversight, and of the work of all similar organizations. . . .

"I like the idea of a public-membership organization, on which the Farm Bureau rests, every member paying his annual dues. . . . If there is such an organization contributing a good round sum (in the end certainly not less than one thousand or two thousand dollars in each good agricultural county annually) then the organization may safely accept funds from the outside. These funds would not then be gifts that might control the situation; they would be contributions from people and groups that desire to help. The support of Farm Bureaus by chambers of commerce is a passing phase. I hope that contributions from such bodies will continue, but they should be only contributions and not control or ownership.

". . . In practice it will be found that the government will not provide sufficient funds to support all the work that will be wanted. It is also due the Agent that he have the backing of his people. I do not see how it is

possible for the Farm Bureau to get very far until there is a good background organization with a voting membership."

It must be said to the lasting credit of the agricultural college officials that for the most part they took the broad-minded view of the subject and decided that despite the dangers due to inexperience, the control must be placed largely in the hands of the local farmer. The part of the college must be to act as faithful guide and servant.

Another problem which caused much perplexity and which in the end brought about a material modification of the conception of the duties of the farm bureau as distinct from those of the County Agent, had to do with commercial activities, particularly coöperative buying.

When the County Agents first went to work they were to a very considerable extent on trial. This was particularly true in those counties where rather heavy local contributions to the expenses of the Agent were made, and where no farm bureau existed. Ordinarily one of the statements made when interesting local farmers and business men in the county farm bureau idea or in the employment of a County Agent, was to the effect that the Agent would repay his cost many times over, in the way of increased production, improved conditions, disease and insect control, and through the application of other scientific methods. After the Agent got the job, however, he found that it was a little difficult to check up on the increases in yield, or the improvement in fertility, due to the growing of a crop of soy beans, for instance. The increase might be there but the farmer could not see it. Or seeing it, might credit it to favorable weather conditions or other variable factors. Furthermore, the human

memory is notoriously brief and gratitude notably absent when it comes to remembering former onerous conditions and appreciating improvements made. The improvements are soon taken as a matter of course and the author thereof forgotten. On the other hand, the annual extraction of a hard, cash, membership fee was an operation possessed of vivid personal reality. It, therefore, frequently happened that a farmer might be inclined to weigh his cash benefits arising from the County Agent's presence, against his cash outgo appurtenant thereto. This naturally led to an effort on the part of the County Agent to make a showing on a cash basis.

Looking about him, the Agent noted here and there a local farmers' club or perhaps a Grange or Farmers' Union buying fertilizers, feed, salt, coal, and certain other supplies coöperatively and at considerable cash savings to themselves. This idea fitted in well with the County Agent's own convictions that marketing systems on the farm, both as to buying and as to selling, should be improved. It also furnished the means of justifying his existence on a purely cash basis. He adopted the idea of coöperative buying and soon the practice was quite general. In most states the idea was never officially sanctioned but it flourished nevertheless. Throughout the eastern half of the country fertilizer was the one product most frequently purchased coöperatively by County Agents, either directly or through utilization of some local farmer groups for the actual completion of the transaction.

The local fertilizer agents were first to be heard from in opposition to this plan and since many of them were prominent in local activities and had contributed to the support of the County Agent, their objections had no lit-

the force. Soon the large fertilizer companies took up the fight to protect their agents. Various influences were brought to bear and a number of cases are on record where county agricultural agents were forced to resign their positions because of their activities in promoting cooperative buying.

In several states the idea of cooperating with the local dealers was developed. Arrangements were made where by the dealer was to perform a minimum of service, usually merely transmitting the pooled order, with check, and receiving the shipment. For this he received a small fee—usually fifty cents to one dollar per ton—about one-third to one-fourth his former charge. This oftentimes pacified the local dealer, but not so the parent fertilizer company.

The larger fertilizer companies saw themselves rapidly getting into a most unhappy situation. They were glad to see the County Agent in the field; his work increased the use of fertilizers. They were anxious to cut down in any way possible the admittedly high selling costs involved in the distribution of their product. But they felt that they could not afford to cut loose from their local selling agent system, built up by many years of persistent effort. Cooperative buying has the disagreeable result of throwing *all* the business in a given community, or cooperating unit, to one single company. There may be agents of five to ten competing companies in that community, but the pooled order goes to the agent of only one of them and the rest threaten to, and frequently do, give up their agencies. The following year a different company may be the lowest bidder and the fortunate agent of the preceding year will be out of business in that section. The disrupting effect upon the parent company is evident.

If the territory could be divided between companies, the orders apportioned or pooled, or the companies consolidated into one large central organization all of the undoubted economies of distribution through coöperative groups *could* be secured and a satisfactory profit still realized by the manufacturers. Any such combination or apportionment would, however, apparently be a clear violation of the Sherman Anti-trust Law, and could not be considered by the fertilizer companies.

Finally it became necessary for Dr. A. C. True of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, to make definite rulings as to the extent to which the County Agent could participate in coöperative buying. These rulings were in accordance with the general policies of the Department and stated in effect that the County Agent should confine his attention to educational matters. Education in the matter of selling farm crops or purchasing supplies would be considered a part of the County Agent's regular duties. Demonstrations along this line might extend as far as the actual organization of a coöperative buying group. But once organized the County Agent must have nothing to do with the ordering of goods, handling of funds, or other business transactions.

An effort was made throughout the various states to carry out the sense of this ruling.

W. F. Handschin, Vice Director of the Agricultural Extension Service of the University of Illinois, in January, 1919, instructed the Illinois farm advisors very definitely on the question of commercial activities, in the following language:

"As I see it, it is not the chief, nor even the secondary, business of the farm bureau, and much less of the farm advisor, to attempt to purchase all of the miscellaneous commodities upon which a few cents can be saved to

the farmers by buying in quantity and paying cash. First, because when all of the costs in time and overhead expense are taken into account there is usually a very small saving, if any. Second, because the county as a unit does not usually lend itself well to the distribution of the commodity purchased. Third, because the advisor being largely on salary derived from public funds has no right to spend his time competing with other selling agencies that do not happen to be so fortunate as to be subsidized to the extent of ten or fifteen percent on their gross sales. And lastly, because if the advisor is worth anything in his work of helping to solve the most essential agricultural problems confronting his county, he cannot afford to be using his time to save his farmers ten cents when he should be helping them to earn two dollars and a half. . . . The activities of the farm bureaus and the farm advisors, in so far as they have to do with commercial and coöperative activities, should be confined largely to the study and development of better selling methods (of farm products). . . . In the working out of this plan the farm advisor will be what the name implies, a real advisor to his constituency in working out their problems in distribution, just as he has been in helping them to work out their problems in production during the last six and one-half years. This may be in the planning and organization of a fruit or vegetable shipping organization in Union or some other county in southern Illinois, or in the organization of a livestock shippers' association in LaSalle or Henry County. . . . Once the agency is organized and the business established, the farmers themselves, or their agent, must take charge. We have said that the farm advisor is not a purchasing agent on a public subsidy, neither is he a selling agent for farmers with a similar advantage. He is an educational and advisory agency in the most practical sense of the terms."

The discussion of commercial activity on the part of farm organizations, profiteering, unfair practices and retaliatory methods was becoming so heated at that time that Mr. Handschin felt called upon to add the following:

"I cannot close without a word regarding our attitude toward the entire question and the people it involves, in other words, our philosophy in the whole matter. It seems to me it is worth noting that in discussing the problems of distribution, our attitude is not essentially different from our attitude toward the problem of production and the people concerned with it. Both production and distribution are still very inefficient—so is consumption for that matter. Some producers are dishonest or greedy or both. So are some of the men engaged in distribution. In so far as any set of men is dishonest or their practices vicious, they should be made to reform or be driven out of business, whether they are distributing foodstuffs or renting land to tenants under vicious systems of tenure. In so far as they are merely inefficient they must be helped to work out more efficient methods. Those who cannot do this must eventually be eliminated.

"We must keep in mind that the railroad was not invented to punish the man who was furnishing transportation so much less efficiently with his stagecoach. It represented merely a better method. The inventor of the linotype machine was not 'mad at' the old-fashioned typesetter. He merely found a better way of doing an important piece of the world's work. Progress is not made by appeals to class prejudice and class hatred. If our motive principle is to 'get' some one, we shall 'get' no one except ourselves and contribute roundly to the breaking down of democracy in the bargain. Demagoguery in its reaction against autocracy gave us the Russia of to-day, a despotism compared with which the Russia of the Czar was a kindergarten picnic.

"What we need is sanity, and the courage to be honest with ourselves as well as the courage to stand for what we think is justly due us. What we need is to face the facts, to stand for fair play, and to apply reason as well as rawhide."

These rulings and opinions plainly forbade the County Agent's direct participation in buying or selling operations. Here was a definite point and limitation beyond which the agent could not go. If the practice of cooperative buying was to be continued it must be done by the farmers themselves. Here was a definite job for the farm bureau, separate and distinct from its duties arising out of its relationship to the County Agent for demonstration and educational purposes. In a sense it made the county farm bureau an absolute necessity in the community. A purchasing agent had to be appointed—and later employed. Committees had to be selected to ascertain the needs of the various districts in the county. Operations were expanded. Soon more funds were needed and the farm bureau itself took over the task of soliciting memberships. Henceforth the County Agent and the farm bureau assumed more of the relationship of employee and employer. Coöperating with the County Agent was only one of the lines of work of the farm bureau; it had other lines which its officers considered almost if not quite as important.

It is not too much to say that the entire structure, nature and purpose of the county farm bureau changed at this point—the date varying in the different states. From that time forward the farm bureau rather than the County Agent was to be the dominant factor.

CRYSTALLIZATION INTO STATE UNITS

With the county farm bureaus becoming numerous and active in many of the states, and with the idea of centralization already established through the existence of the state leaders of county agents, usually located at the state college of agriculture, crystallization into state associations or state farm bureaus was a natural and logical development.

The idea of a state organization seems to have grown out of the practice of inviting the county farm bureau presidents to attend conferences at the state agricultural colleges, held either in connection with Farmers' Week exercises, or as a part of the annual meeting of county agents. New York, California, Minnesota, West Virginia and Vermont were among the first to inaugurate this practice.

It soon developed that these various county units had interests which could best be served by some sort of state organization or association independent of the state educational institutions. The state extension forces were quick to realize that a state federation of the county farm bureaus would provide a powerful influence in securing liberal appropriations from the legislatures for further extension work. The more active officers of the county farm bureaus, on the other hand, saw the possibilities of united action in getting financial support from the state for the furtherance of the county farm bureau work. In some states laws were desired to authorize the county courts to appropriate county funds for the use of the local farm bureaus. In other states the urgent need for some piece of special legislation entirely divorced from

any immediate farm bureau aid was the motive which drew the counties together into more or less definite state units.

In 1917, when New York had attained to thirty-nine active county farm bureau associations, the New York State Federation of County Farm Bureau Associations was organized. Thirty-four counties, representing nearly 40,000 farmers sent delegates to the state meeting. The actual organization process was carried out by the delegates, but the move was largely fathered and guided by M. C. Burritt, at that time State Leader of County Agents, and one of the leading spirits in the earlier phases of the entire farm bureau development.

During Farmer's Week, January, 1917, Nat T. Frame, State Leader of County Agents in West Virginia, and one of the advanced thinkers along farm bureau lines, called a meeting of delegates from the different county farm bureaus for the purpose of discussing the organization of a state federation of county farm bureaus. An organization committee was appointed and instructed to report the following year. In January, 1918, a constitution was adopted and the West Virginia federation effected. A number of other states followed in rapid succession.

CHAPTER IX

THE AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

THE national phase of the Farm Bureau movement also had its inception in New York State. On invitation sent out by the Director of the New York State Federation, representatives of twelve states gathered at Ithaca on February 12, 1919—just two years after the first state federation of county farm bureaus had been organized—to consider the advisability of forming a national organization.

Only nine states were organized at that time to the point where they could claim a state federation or association, but the remaining representatives came from states that were either in the midst of or were contemplating such a move.

President S. L. Strivings, of the New York State Federation, called the meeting to order and stated that the objects of the proposed National Federation were: "(1) to provide the nation with some sane organization thoroughly representative of agriculture throughout the entire United States, which might speak for the farmers of the entire country; (2) to take advantage of a nation-wide organization—the Farm Bureau—which promises great possibilities of usefulness in developing a program which will reach the entire country and which will bring into action the strongest farmers of the nation."

C. B. Smith, head of the States Relations Service, North

and West, pointed out that only some 700 or 800 counties then had farm bureaus and that scarcely 400 of those had real local organizations that were active and functioning properly. Mr. Smith felt that the next big job was to "get real local associations established in every county." He felt that a national organization might help in this work.

After further speeches by J. R. Howard, of Iowa; O. E. Bradfute, of Ohio; Chester Gray, of Missouri; C. V. Gregory, of Illinois, and a number of other representatives, a committee was appointed to outline a plan of procedure designed to effect a national organization. This committee recommended that a meeting be held at Chicago on November 12th and 13th to perfect such an organization and that in the meantime unorganized states should be urged to form state federations of county farm bureaus.

During the interval between the report of the committee and the date set for the conference at Chicago, interest in agricultural circles worked up to a high heat. The possibility of creating a great, new, national farmers' organization on a basis different from anything that had preceded and with elements of strength never before possible, was suddenly borne home alike in professional agricultural circles and to the practical farmer. It was recognized by all that here was a sleeping giant that might be awakened to full power almost immediately. Soon the idea became general that undoubtedly a federation of the state farm bureaus would be effected at the Chicago meeting.

The question as to what the major functions of such an organization should be, immediately occupied the attention of agricultural leaders. The educational groups

associated with the colleges of agriculture saw the advantages of such an organization but feared that in the hands of necessarily inexperienced men the great powers created might in the end be the means of wrecking all their carefully built-up work of years. Already farmer leaders in the Middle West were talking of using the new organization as an instrument to solve their marketing problems on a nation-wide coöperative plan. The argument as to whether the prospective organization was to be primarily educational or whether it should be designed specifically to bring about improved business and economic conditions, increased as the date for the convention approached. In general the Eastern, Southern, and Western states championed the former view, while the Middle West (which was more completely organized and farther advanced in state farm bureau activities) insisted upon the business organization idea.

When the convention finally assembled in the Red Room of the LaSalle Hotel at Chicago, speculation was rife and the atmosphere was surcharged with a feeling of electric tenseness. The outlying states felt that the Mid-West was determined to put through a program of what to them seemed radical commercialism. They feared this would sooner or later wreck the organization. The Mid-Western delegation, on the other hand, feared that the surrounding states might combine and prevent the organization of a federation pledged to do the things which the Mid-West thought most essential to the economic readjustment of agriculture.

Some 500 delegates and visitors were in attendance, 220 of whom were from Illinois. Oscar E. Bradfute, of Ohio, was made chairman and Frank W. Smith, of New York, secretary. It was finally decided to seat one voting

delegate from each state represented, regardless of the farm bureau membership within the respective states. The delegates were :

New Hampshire, George M. Putnam; Vermont, E. B. Cornwall; Massachusetts, E. F. Richardson; Connecticut, C. H. Savage; New York, S. L. Strivings; New Jersey, H. E. Taylor; Delaware, H. H. Hayward; Maryland, E. P. Cohill; Virginia, James H. Quisinbury; West Virginia, Gray Silver; North Carolina, C. R. Hudson; Georgia, James W. Wilson; Tennessee, W. A. Schoenfield; Mississippi, J. W. Willis; Texas, R. R. Bowen; Oklahoma, George Bishop; Ohio, H. P. Miller; Michigan, C. A. Bingham; Indiana, J. G. Brown; Kentucky, J. S. Crenshaw; Illinois, Harvey J. Sconce; Iowa, J. R. Howard; Missouri, Chester H. Gray; Minnesota, H. J. Farmer; South Dakota, H. C. Cobb; Nebraska, F. C. Crocker; Kansas, Ralph Snyder; Colorado, F. R. Lamb; Montana, F. S. Cooley; Utah, J. F. Burton; California, W. H. Walker.

Harvey J. Sconce, president of the Illinois bureau, known as the Illinois Agricultural Association, delivered the first keynote speech and at once set forth the Illinois viewpoint. He said: "The inception of this national farm bureau association is taking place at a most opportune time. The United States is at present experiencing the greatest period of industrial unrest in its entire history. It is now just one year since the signing of the armistice. During this interval more than 3000 strikes have been inaugurated in this country. Is it any wonder that production has dwindled and cost of living has so greatly increased?"

"It is our duty in creating this organization to avoid any policy that will align organized farmers with the

radicals of other organizations. The policy should be thoroughly American in every respect,—a constructive organization instead of a destructive organization.

“We shall organize, not to fight any one or to antagonize, but to coöperate and to construct, managing the affairs of agriculture in a broad business manner, following the policy that most of the ills complained of by the individual will disappear when business is done in business ways.

“In order to do the business involved in a national agricultural association it will be necessary that this association be represented in every place where the business of the farmer is taken into consideration.

“The great idea should be to keep control of our food products until they get much closer to the ultimate consumer than they do at the present time, thereby not only returning to us a profit on the article produced, but serving humanity in a more efficient manner by giving the consumer an article of quality at no increased cost.”

S. L. Strivings, president of the New York Farm Bureau Federation, followed with a second keynote speech, voicing more nearly the attitude of the agricultural college leaders who had developed the farm bureaus. He said: “There is a wide diversity of agricultural interests in the United States, varying from the Corn Belt both east and west. It is difficult to bring all these divergent interests together, but I believe these men here assembled can accomplish this. The nation needs an organization such as we propose to build, because it has not heretofore had the advantage of concentrated loyalty and concentrated sanity—these things have been scattered. Farmers can stabilize the nation and a national agricultural program is imperatively needed.”

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Mr. Strivings pleaded earnestly for more education—education of a new kind—education of city people to understand the problems of the farm and of country people to understand the problems of city folks. He said, "Farmers must get past their own gateways and get out and see what is going on in the world. We must put agriculture into proper relationship with the rest of the world."

The last keynote speech was made by J. R. Howard, president of the Iowa Federation of Farm Bureaus, who took a middle ground attitude. "The East and the West, the North and the South, have agricultural problems which are different only in their external aspects," he said. "These problems are basically similar or identical. We need to create a national spirit in our agricultural life. The farm bureaus enabled us to look over our line fences, the state organizations enabled us to work on our state problems, and now we have before us the possibility of a national association to create the national agricultural spirit. Perhaps we shall soon be acting internationally. I stand as a rock against radicalism, but I believe in an organization which strikes out from the shoulder."

The full declaration of purposes was intentionally avoided by the assembly, but in every official action the strife between the two elements was evident. Every move was weighed with reference to the effect upon ultimate voting strength. The Mid-West had the more individual members at that time, but the other states totaled the more votes. The question of future representation was finally compromised on the basis of one director for each state and one additional director for each 20,000 members.

The same division cropped out when the question of financing the organization was considered. Those who favored active business operations wanted heavy fees and a big budget; the advocates of the purely educational type of organization not only felt that a big fund was not needed, but that its existence would be a constant temptation to embark upon commercial pursuits.

Harvey Sconce appealed to the delegates to get a broad vision of the possibilities of a national association and to get behind it with a financial program that would insure success.

"The thing that wrecks farmers' associations is the thing you people call vision," declared one of the California delegates heatedly. "We do not know who the leaders of this national association will be, nor what sort of program they will have, yet we are asked to put up big funds on faith. Many an association has been wrecked because of too much money."

"Our vision should not be a vision of gold," declared H. C. McKenzie, of New York State. "We do not need any such sums of money as some people think. All we need the first year is funds to conduct the work on a very conservative basis."

J. S. Crenshaw, of Kentucky, replied, "The organization movement has been sweeping Kentucky like a prairie fire, and the Kentuckians have been signing \$10 membership checks as fast as they could get hold of their check books. Kentucky is not here to support any penny-wise-and-pound-foolish policy. This national work is of a magnitude and scope that requires money. We do not want any ten-cent policy. We would be ashamed to go back to our people with any ten-cent proposition."

Matters came to the point on several occasions where

it seemed inevitable that the meeting should break up with the withdrawal of the Illinois delegation and the formation of a Mid-Western association. All realized, though, that to have real strength the entire body must hang together. A more conciliatory spirit finally developed and a compromise plan was arrived at for financing and representation. Mr. Howard was elected president of the temporary organization, and it was decided to defer final plans of operation until after the ratification meeting set for the following March 3rd.¹

Many leaders of the farm bureau movement in the Mid-West felt sorely disappointed with the results of the

¹In the constitution adopted Article II sets forth the objects as being "to correlate and strengthen the state farm bureaus and similar state organizations of the several states in the national federation, to promote, protect and represent the business, economic, social, and educational interests of the farmers of the nation, and to develop agriculture."

Membership in the national organization was declared to be limited to state farm bureau federations and state agricultural associations based on the farm bureau or similar plan approved by the executive committee.

A democratic form of government was provided through a plan of representation on the basis of one director for each state and one additional director for each 20,000 members in a state. These directors hold one meeting annually and elect the executive committee of twelve members and the president and vice-president, each for a period of one year. In addition there is provided a "House of Delegates" made up of one delegate from each state and one additional delegate for each 10,000 farmers of the state. These delegates sit with the directors and take part in the discussions but have no vote.

The national dues, after a number of subsequent changes, were placed at fifty cents per local member per year.

The president was made the active, executive head of the organization and is an ex-officio member and chairman of the executive committee. Responsibility for general policies was placed with the executive committee.

The constitution provides that "any officer or director of the American Farm Bureau Federation who shall become a candidate for an elective or appointive state or national office, shall at once resign and be automatically dropped from his official position in the American Farm Bureau Federation."

organization meeting. They felt that the conservatism of the delegates from the sections outside the Corn Belt had forced through a set of regulations that would throttle the purposes held by the Mid-West group. An editorial in the *Prairie Farmer* written during the heat of the fray declared:

"The American Farm Bureau Federation was launched at Chicago November 12-14, but it took to the water with its hull stove in and its engines hitting on two cylinders. Instead of being born of the enthusiastic vision of big service to the business of American agriculture with which many of the delegates were inspired, it was born of the suspicion and conservatism which others brought to the meeting."

The editor recognized the underlying principle that had been gained, however, when he added:

"The important thing, of course, is that it was born at all. Never before have farmers from New Hampshire to Mississippi and California been able to meet for such a purpose and find any common ground at all on which to set their feet. The new association, imperfect as it is, is a great step forward, and when the permanent organization meeting comes March 3, many of the imperfections of the present constitution can be remedied."

The first executive committee members were H. J. Sconce of Illinois, O. E. Bradfute of Ohio, Chester H. Gray of Missouri, W. H. Walker of California, W. G. Jamison of Colorado, John F. Burton of Utah, H. E. Taylor of New Jersey, E. B. Cornwall of Vermont, E. F. Richardson of Massachusetts, Gray Silver of West Virginia, James W. Morton of Georgia, and George Bishop of Oklahoma. Mr. S. L. Strivings of New York was elected Vice-President, and J. S. Crenshaw of Ken-

tucky, Treasurer. President Howard ¹ immediately began to turn his attention to the preliminary phases of the work and long before the ratification meeting on March 3 was giving his entire time to the affairs of the Federation.

Time has a remarkable way of smoothing out differences and showing things up in their true perspective and by the time the ratification meeting rolled around the following March a spirit much different from that displayed at the November organization meeting was shown. Many of the delegates had had an opportunity to get better acquainted, more of an effort was made to see things in a broad-minded way, some of the disturbing elements had been excluded by reason of the new basis of representation, and the necessity of composing their differences and getting down to work had been borne in upon every delegate.

It was agreed that each state should pay into the national treasury fifty cents for each member of a county farm bureau enrolled. An attempt was also made to do away with the sectional plan of representation on the executive committee, but without success. Twenty-eight

¹ James Raley Howard was born March 24, 1875. He grew up on a portion of the same farm which he now operates near the village of Clemons, Marshall County, Iowa. He attended Grinnell and Penn Colleges and completed his studies at the University of Chicago, from which he received the degree of Bachelor of Philosophy. He taught in a North Carolina college for two years, then went back to his home community and began farming. Later, certain discouragements arose and he accepted a position as cashier in a local bank. After five years of this work he returned to the farm. That was in 1909. Since that time he has added to the original 160 acres which he bought until in 1920 he had a fine, high grade 480-acre tract, known as "Homelands."

When the Marshall County Farm Bureau was organized, Mr. Howard was chosen president, and two years later when the Iowa State federation of farm bureaus was formed, Mr. Howard was again chosen to lead the work.

states were ready to ratify the constitution and the membership for these states totaled approximately 400,000. Theoretically this gave the Federation a fund of \$200,000 for the year, but this was materially reduced by deductions for the portion of the year previous to March 3, which had already expired.

President Howard was voted a salary of \$15,000, J. W. Coverdale, who had been prominent in the development of county agent work in Iowa, and had been instrumental in effecting the Iowa State Farm Bureau Federation, was elected secretary and granted a salary of \$12,000. Gray Silver of West Virginia was elected Washington representative at a salary of \$12,000.

It was decided to open headquarters in Chicago and a legislative office in Washington. The idea of attacking the economic questions at once gained in favor and a tentative program was outlined.

One of the most important decisions was largely influenced by a speech by Henry C. Wallace, editor of *Wallace's Farmer*, and later appointed Secretary of Agriculture, who said: "This federation must get to work at once on a real business program if it is to justify its existence. *That doesn't mean turning the work over to committees of farmers, either. Every line of work must be in charge of experts.* The best qualified men in the United States should be hired to manage each of the various lines of work. This federation must not degenerate into an educational or social institution. It must be made the most powerful business institution in the country."

The Chicago meeting was continue en route to Washington, whence the entire committee repaired to look into the legislative situation.

CHAPTER X

INTENSIFICATION OF ORGANIZATION

WITH the organization of the national federation the farm bureau work again passed into a new phase. In the states already well organized carefully planned membership campaigns were inaugurated, county solicitors being supplied from state headquarters. In the unorganized or poorly organized states men were provided from national headquarters to take charge of the membership drives until such time as the state organization itself became strong enough to take over the work and push it vigorously.

States which had been charging a nominal membership fee of only one or two dollars changed over to a ten-dollar basis in most cases, although several of the less prosperous agricultural states decided on a five-dollar rate. Practically all new states organized were placed on a ten-dollar basis from the start. The point was emphasized that regardless of how large a local fee was paid in by each member, only fifty cents could go to the national organization and the remainder would be spent at home, part for state purposes and part locally. The usual division of a ten-dollar membership fee is: national \$.50, state \$3.50, and local \$6.

It should be noted that this intensified organization work was carried on entirely independent of the state

extension forces and in practically all cases independent of the local county agent. The county agent usually encouraged the movement and always gave his moral support, but he usually took no active part in the solicitation. ?

The solicitors ordinarily worked in crews with a trained leader sent out from state or national headquarters. This leader employed leading local farmers wherever possible, and after a few preliminary meetings to arouse enthusiasm the solicitors would start out in pairs to cover every mile of road in the county and call at every farmhouse. A favorite method adopted was to have the prospect sign a membership application blank which was also a check on the farmer's local bank authorizing the cashier to pay the farm bureau the sum of ten dollars on the first of January of each of the succeeding three years, specifically, and of every year thereafter until otherwise ordered. This plan, on a five-dollar basis, was first used by the Iowa Farm Bureau, but was soon adopted in many other states.

The percentage of signers secured in these membership drives, particularly in the winter and spring of 1919 and 1920, was truly amazing. In many counties of Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, and Iowa 95 percent of the farmers called on became members. Many counties made records of around *ninety percent membership of all the farmers in the county*. The state of Iowa, which numbered approximately 217,000 farms, had in 1920 135,000 farm bureau members. Illinois had a percentage showing almost as high. In Illinois the membership fee was placed at \$15 and the extra funds were used locally. New Hampshire claims the distinction of being the first state to have a farm bureau in every county, but Iowa was a close second.

The spirit prevailing is well illustrated by the follow-

ing, which purports to be the report of a southern Illinois farmer:

"From Chicago to Cairo, and from the Iowa shore to the Indiana state line rural Illinois is aflame with enthusiasm for Farm Bureau organization. In eighty-seven counties of our Prairie State 106,413 farmers have joined up with the Illinois Agricultural Association. We have paid and pledged \$15 each per year to forward the cause of organized agriculture as founded on the Farm Bureau idea. Five we send up to the I. A. A. to be used in carrying through the big state program. And of that five dollar bill, the state sends a half-dollar over to the American Farm Bureau Federation to be used in carrying on the magnificent national farmers' program of which we are all so proud. Our organization, our money.

"I remember the day I was tackled by one of Sailor's solicitors. He jumped out of my neighbor's 'flivver,' hopped the drainage ditch and tried to stand me up in a fence corner and make me listen to his whole rigamarole of reasons why and wherefore. I cut him off rather short, I think, by asking if I looked like the sort of customer who had to be sold on farm organization. Didn't he suppose I read the papers? Didn't he know that I saw the need of it every day in the year? Didn't he think I had any brains at all? Where was there a farmer who surmised that he was going to get his full measure of economic and social justice without organization? I'd sign up right then and there and he could save his furious spiel for the man across the road.

"And if he didn't mind, I'd like to go along and see just what effect his gab would have on my other neighbor. No, I didn't want to say anything in particular myself, but I would like to witness the fun. So I did go along. But I guess the joke was on me, because my hard-boiled neighbor joined up as soon as the man told him

who he was—quicker than I did. Neighbor did most of the talking in fact. He's hot under the collar. He wants to fight. He has a passion against middlemen. He has 2000 bushels of corn in his crib, corn which he couldn't sell when it was quoted at \$1.35 a bushel because he couldn't get cars to ship it. He's mad clear through and talks vehemently about such things as 'Boards of Trade,' 'Speculators,' 'Committee of Seventeen,' 'Commodity Organizations,' 'Agricultural Banks,' 'Pooling,' 'Real Co-operation,' and so on."

Lack of real county farm bureaus in the South, together with something of a lack of understanding of southern agricultural, civic, and social problems, caused a slower growth in that section. The County Councils of Agriculture found in the southern states more nearly resembled the early forms of the farm bureau in the North, and were not as good building material as the county units made up of individual farmer memberships. Kentucky, Georgia, and Texas made good progress, however, and now have strong state organizations.

All this campaign work was accompanied, of course, by enthusiastic speeches in every county, big headlines in the local papers and prominent mention by the farm press. In addition practically every farmer in every county covered had the benefits and possibilities of the farm bureau painted to him in vivid fashion by word of mouth, possibly by his most influential farmer neighbor. The war-time drives for the Liberty Loans and the Red Cross had taught organized publicity and campaign methods and these were used to the full.

Big things were expected of the Farm Bureau and big things were promised.

PART III

WHAT THE FARM BUREAU AIMS TO ACCOMPLISH

CHAPTER XI

THE PROGRAM OF WORK—NATIONAL, STATE, COUNTY

THE stated objects of the American Farm Bureau Federation are: "to develop, strengthen, and correlate the work of the State Farm Bureau Federations of the Nation; to encourage and promote coöperation of all representative agricultural organizations in every effort to improve facilities and conditions for the economic production, conservation, marketing, transportation, and distribution of farm products; to further the study and enactment of constructive agricultural legislation; to advise with representatives of the public agricultural institutions coöperating with farm bureaus in the determination of nation-wide policies, and to inform farm bureau members regarding all movements that affect their interests."

The program of work falls under the following subdivisions:

General

1. To develop a completely unified national organization to act as spokesman for the farmer and to adequately

represent the farmer and the farmer's interests on all occasions.

Educational

1. To create in the urban mind a better conception of the Farmer's relationship to other units in the social and economic structure.

2. To reestablish agriculture in the public mind as the foremost industry, on which all others depend, and, in the prosecution of which man reaches his highest plane of development.

3. To encourage and assist in the development of food production to its highest state of efficiency.

4. To foster and develop all those lines of endeavor which make for better homes, better social and religious life, better health, and better rural living in every sense.

5. To conduct referenda on various national questions to determine farm sentiment before determining legislative action.

Legislative

1. To safeguard the rights and interests and to assert the needs of the farmer whenever occasion may arise.

2. To establish without question the legality of collective bargaining.

3. To insist upon the presence of "farmer minds" on all boards and commissions affecting agriculture, appointed by Congress or the President.

4. To defend the farmer's viewpoint in all matters relating to tax levies, tariffs, currency, banking, railways, highways, waterways, foreign markets, the merchant marine, territorial acquisitions and all similar legislative matters involving questions of policy, in any way affecting agriculture.

5. To insist on some arrangement between capital and labor which will insure freedom from disrupting and criminally wasteful strikes.

6. To strengthen the Federal Farm Loan Act and secure in addition, the establishment of a system of personal credits.

7. To demand the regulation, under government supervision, of all commercial interests whose size and kind of business enables them to establish a monopoly dangerous to the best interests of the nation.

Economic

1. To extend coöperative marketing of farm crops to the point in the distribution system that the maximum benefits are secured for the producer, and incidentally, for the consumer.

2. To limit the profits and reduce the costs of distribution in all lines not handled coöperatively.

3. To so estimate the effective world supply of any farm product and to so regulate the flow to market as to eliminate sharp and extreme price fluctuations.

4. To establish new foreign markets for surplus American farm products.

5. To provide cheaper sources of fertilizer and more economical means of production.

In order to carry out this program of work various departments have been created from time to time and at the time of writing stand as follows:

Organization—In charge of the secretary and equipped to assist any state desiring help in forming a state organization or in conducting a membership drive. At the time of the first annual meeting in March, 1920, there were twenty-eight states affiliated with the Federation; at the time of the second annual meeting in December, 1920, there were forty states in the Federation.

Legislative—Conducted through a branch office and staff at Washington, D. C.

Coöperative Marketing—Created specifically for the purpose of developing a perfected national scheme of marketing farm products in such a way as to reduce the excessive costs of transferring them from the producer to the consumer. This department has conducted its work, to date, largely through special committees appointed to consider the marketing of a given commodity as, for instance, the Farmers' Grain Marketing Committee of Seventeen, the Farmers' Livestock Marketing Committee of Fifteen, and the Farmers' Dairy Products Marketing Committee of Eleven.

Transportation—Organized to help improve to the greatest possible extent the service of the railroads, to prevent excessive transportation burdens on farm products, and to investigate tendencies in rates and regulations affecting agricultural products.

Economics and Statistics—Designed to furnish up-to-date and reliable information along such lines as analyses of crop statistics; analyses of credit and business conditions and trends; studies of world supply of agricultural products, crop conditions and forecasts based thereon; tendencies in tariff, merchant marine, and internal revenue legislation, commodity price tendencies, improved cost accounting methods for farmers, and related subjects.

Information—This department seeks to keep the general public sympathetically informed as to the purposes and accomplishments of organized agriculture. It is also a service department to all the other departments of the Federation and to the executive head. It maintains a weekly news service for farm papers, issues special news

stories to the daily press, prepares feature stories for farm publications, magazines, and syndicates, and prints and distributes pamphlets and bulletins. It aims to use every means at its disposal, working through the state organizations, to create in every farm bureau member an intense consciousness of the responsibilities and privileges of his membership.

Legal—To act as general counsel for the Federation, to draw contracts, investigate coöperative law and safeguard the organization in all legal aspects.

Finance—To collect dues, prepare budgets, approve expenditures, and keep records suitable for public audit.

In most instances committees of three to five members, ordinarily composed largely of members of the executive committee, have general advisory oversight of the plans and policies of each department.

The summarized budget for 1921 is given below:¹

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Executive Office (salaries and expenses)..... | \$58,000 |
| General Office | 47,100 |
| Executive Committee Meetings | 20,000 |
| Annual Meeting | 12,000 |
| Organization Department | 46,300 |
| Department of Information | 27,500 |
| Legislative Department | 32,868 |
| Department of Coöperation | 21,200 |
| Department of Economics and Statistics..... | 25,000 |
| Legal Department | 12,000 |
| Transportation Department | 37,000 |
| Finance Department (not including treasurer's salary).... | 3,425 |
| Emergency uses | 50,000 |
| Foundation Fund (Building)..... | 100,000 |
| | <hr/> |
| | \$492,393 |

¹During a period of rapid growth the amount of funds available for any given year is considerably less than the amount indicated by the membership, since considerable time must elapse before the new membership dues are actually paid into the national treasury.

As has already been noted, the various state federations carry on programs of work quite similar in nature to that conducted by the national organization. They also have a legislative, an economic, and an educational program, and endeavor to correlate and make more effective the work of the county farm bureaus. There is, however, no conflict between the work of the national and the state organizations, since the latter work almost entirely within the state limits. Their legislative work is concerned with the state legislature and their marketing work has to do with a state-wide system, at most. Even the educational work need not conflict materially, since the state ordinarily confines its activities to the publications of county and state-wide circulation.

On the other hand, the national organization is in position to provide the necessary information to the state officers which will enable them to intelligently attack legislative problems. It can provide specialists and research departments to go into subjects much more exhaustively and on a broader scale than would be possible by the state organization. In marketing efforts it can take hold where the state leaves off and carry the product on further to market. Theoretically, there might appear to be considerable room for friction on the old question of "state's rights vs. centralized authority," which crops out constantly in governmental circles, but in practice no such dissension has yet arisen in the farm bureau organization.

The state programs of work follow, in a general way, a common plan but each has its modifications to suit local conditions and local funds.

In 1920 the Illinois state organization had the most elaborate program of any of the states. Its state funds were spent as follows:

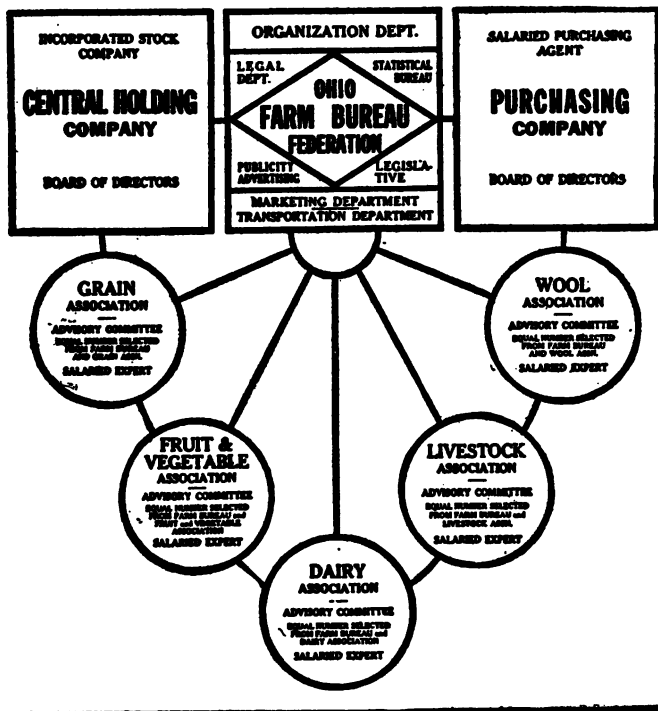
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| | |
|--|--------------|
| Organization Department | \$156,463.51 |
| General Livestock Department (marketing and investigation) | 31,076.75 |
| Dairy Livestock Department (marketing and investigation) | 2,532.06 |
| Grain Marketing Department (marketing and investigation) | 22,235.11 |
| Produce Marketing Department (marketing and investigation) | 1,240.64 |
| Phosphate-Limestone Purchasing Department | 20,132.70 |
| Financial Department | 9,897.46 |
| Publicity Department | 11,609.24 |
| Claims Department | 3,458.54 |
| Dairy Produce Marketing Department..... | 4,516.29 |
| | <hr/> |
| General Office Expenses, printing, etc. | 263,162.30 |
| Payment to American Farm Bureau Federation..... | 45,622.57 |
| Other special expenses | 50,468.34 |
| Reserve Fund | 27,583.74 |
| | 33,842.88 |
| | <hr/> |
| Total fund used or available..... | \$420,679.83 |

Except in the case of the phosphate and limestone purchases the state organization did not enter into the actual handling of products or supplies directly. County or state coöperative organizations for the actual handling of farm products were fostered and encouraged. Assistance was given in organizing the local units where needed.

This, in general, is the plan followed by most state farm bureaus. In Michigan, however, the actual coöperative marketing work for a time was tied up somewhat more closely with the central farm bureau office. In Texas membership in a local coöperative marketing association constitutes membership in the farm bureau organization also. The plan of having the actual marketing work done by the farm bureau directly is not considered entirely satisfactory by many, and it is probable that an effort will be made to bring about greater uniformity among the organization plans of the different states.

PRIMARY ORGANIZATION OF THE **BUSINESS PROGRAM** OF **THE OHIO FARM BUREAU FEDERATION** COLUMBUS, OHIO



The Ohio Plan of Correlation of Agricultural Activities with the State Farm Bureau.

The Ohio Farm Bureau has worked out a rather elaborate system of coördination of farm bureau activities with those of other organizations already in existence. The plan is to have the grain marketing done, for instance, through a state grain growers' association which would control the grain elevators owned coöperatively. The advisory committee of this association would be made up of equal numbers each from the state farm bureau, the grange, and the grain growers' association. In the earlier stages of this development the farm bureau uses its funds to establish the grain growers' association, but once established it should be self-supporting. The same plan of organization and development is contemplated for the wool growers, the fruit growers, the dairymen, and the livestock men. The thought is then to bring the marketing activities of all these associations together under one large incorporated holding company which would have general supervision of all marketing operations.

The personnel of the board of directors of this holding company would be divided equally between the farm bureau and the grange and selected to represent, as nearly as possible, all the different types of agriculture in the state. The purchasing of supplies, fertilizers, etc., would be handled by a separately organized company similarly tied up with the various commodity organization units.

The diagram on page 135 illustrates the interrelationship of the various units in this plan of organization.

The Ohio Farm Bureau differs from those of most of the other states, also, in having a joint arrangement with the grange whereby both bodies finance a separate and distinct organization to carry on such legislative work as may be required within the state and in coöperating with the national legislative office at Washington. This or-

ganization is known as the Ohio Home Protective League and has been very successful in its earlier campaigns. This arrangement tends to more completely divorce political activities from the farm bureau.

In Texas every grower's marketing contract signed under the auspices of the Texas Farm Bureau contains a clause authorizing the deduction of Texas Farm Bureau membership dues from the proceeds of the sale of the crop. Forty thousand Texas growers, at the time of writing, had signed a binding contract to sell all their cotton produced during the next five years through a sales agency set up by the Farm Bureau. Other commodities for which coöperative selling associations have been formed are wool, hay, and sweet potatoes. Under the Texas plan, also followed by several other states, the Farm Bureau marketing service is available to its members only.

When the Michigan State Farm Bureau Elevator Exchange was first organized in 1920 it was made a department of the State Farm Bureau. It was soon decided, however, to sever this close organic connection and incorporate as an independent business concern. The Board of Control is made up of farm bureau men and all farmers comprising the ownership of the 95 local elevators which make up the Exchange are expected to be farm bureau members. The difficulties encountered and actual losses incurred by the exchange during the earlier months of its existence were sufficient, apparently, to sharply warn of the embarrassment that might result to the State Farm Bureau in the event of failure of the Exchange while existing as one of the departments of the Bureau. Separate organization, under Farm Bureau control, is believed by most leaders to be the safer course.

After a poor start in the midst of extraordinarily bad

trade conditions, the Michigan Exchange got under way successfully and in June, 1921, did a business amounting to \$600,000. Ninety percent of the Exchange's sales of grain, hay, and beans were direct to exporters.

A reciprocal arrangement with the Michigan Potato Growers' Exchange—an organization antedating the Michigan Farm Bureau—enables potato-marketing Elevator Exchange members to get special service from the Potato Growers' Exchange, and vice versa for grain-marketing Potato Exchange members. All are coordinated through the Farm Bureau.

The Michigan Farm Bureau early developed along a variety of commercial lines, chief of which, in addition to the Elevator Exchange, were a state wool pool, a pure seed purchasing department, a general farm supplies purchasing department, and a traffic department.

The 1920 wool pool included 3,500,000 pounds and was highly successful in the face of rather discouraging conditions. Much was done to rejuvenate the demoralized wool market both by withholding stocks from trade channels and by entering actively into the manufacture of virgin wool fabrics. Ten thousand blankets were made and sold the first season at practically the cost of production, yet at prices which netted the farmer 30 to 50 percent more for his wool than he could otherwise have obtained. Sales of virgin wool suitings averaged \$1000 a day at the Lansing headquarters during the spring and early summer of 1921. Orders for 28,000 blankets and many miles of suitings and overcoatings were placed to meet fall demands.

While this activity was taken up purely as an emergency measure to create a market for wool when the usual outlets were suddenly closed, the Michigan officers

in charge of this work believe that the practice of furnishing manufactured woollens to farm bureau members has come to stay.

The seed department of the Michigan organization has shown rather extraordinary results also. During the season 1920-21, 3,000,000 pounds of seeds were handled for a total of 65,000 members. The Bureau set a new standard in the seed business by guaranteeing the northern origin and climatic adaptability of every pound of seed it sold, in addition to guaranteeing its purity and percentage of germination.

On a single purchase of a relatively unimportant commodity (white arsenic) a saving of \$9000 was made. This was accomplished by negotiating directly by cable with a broker in London. Fertilizer, coal, binder twine, tile, fencing, harness, feeds, paints, salt, automobile tires, sugar, and insecticides are the commodities purchased in greatest volume.

All goods are handled only on order from local organizations or individual farmer members.

But important as are the national and state activities, the local county farm bureaus and township committees are, after all, the vital units of the farm bureau movement, and it is important to have a clear idea of just how they function.

As we have already noted, the program of county agricultural improvement and education is worked out in coöperation with the County Agent. The various meetings, the funds and enthusiasm of the county farm bureau are then used to push through this program of improvement. The educational side of the county farm bureau program, in so far as it is tied up with the County Agent, was briefly treated in Chapters VI and VII. The accom-

COUNTY FARM BUREAU PROGRAM OF WORK

□ ORGANIZATION

- 1 PLANNING PROGRAM
- 2 COMMITTEE ORGANIZATION
- 3 MEMBERSHIP CAMPAIGN

• DAIRYING

- 1 HERD IMPROVEMENT
- 2 ECONOMICAL FEEDING
- 3 BUILDINGS AND EQUIPMENT
- 4 USE OF MILK

▣ POULTRY

- 1 FLOCK IMPROVEMENT
- 2 BETTER HOUSING
- 3 COOPERATIVE MARKETING

■ MANAGEMENT

- 1 FARM ACCOUNTS
- 2 HOUSEHOLD ACCOUNTS
- 3 CLUB RECORDS
- 4 CREDIT FACILITIES

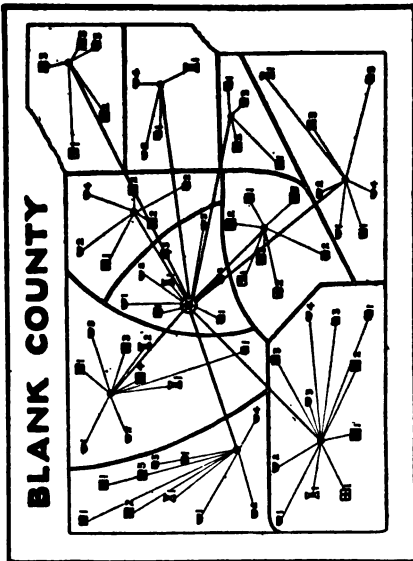
! CLOTHING

- 1 GARMENT MAKING
- 2 CARE AND REPAIR

■ SOILS AND CROPS

- 1 LIMING
- 2 GREEN MANURING
- 3 SOIL IMPROVEMENT

- FARM BUREAU HEADQUARTERS
- COMMUNITY CENTER
- COMMUNITY BOUNDARIES



THE SYMBOLS IN THE ABOVE MAP INDICATE THE PROJECTS ADOPTED IN EACH COMMUNITY USING THE PROGRAM OF WORK IN THE LEFT AS A KEY.

IN THIS TYPICAL COUNTY THERE ARE 2725 FARM FAMILIES, 1800 OF WHICH ARE REPRESENTED IN THE FARM BUREAU MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNTY, TOTALING 2100 MEMBERS. IN ALL 2194 FARM FAMILIES, INCLUDING 1900 FARMERS, 1200 FARM WOMEN, AND 400 BOYS AND GIRLS ARE REACHED BY SOME PHASE OF THE COUNTY PROGRAM OF WORK.

Courtesy, States Relations Service, U. S. Dept. of Agr.

How the County Agent, the Home Demonstration Agent and the Farm Bureau Work Together in a Typical County.

panying diagram will, perhaps, give a clearer idea as to how the educational work of a typical county farm bureau is organized and carried out. The symbols in the map indicate the projects adopted by each community group after consultation with the County Agent or Home Demonstration Agent. The key to the symbols is given at the left.

The business side of the county program is a newer development, entirely independent of the County Agent and not so generally understood. The following description¹ of how this work is carried on in Franklin County, Ohio, gives an interesting glimpse of the machinery at work and the results effected:

"The farm bureau is very strong in Franklin County, having almost 2000 members. The problem of better bargaining was tackled through it.

"The first step was to employ a farm bureau business director. C. B. A. Bryant, a young tractor dealer, because of an unquenchable enthusiasm and salesmanship ability, was chosen.

"'We first need a survey to find out where the leaks are,' declared Frame Brown, president of the farm bureau.

"So an investigation was made in six typical townships to learn what articles were bought and sold by the farmers and how. The results showed that the farmers sold five times as much as they bought, but that because both their buying and selling practices were disadvantageous the actual cash difference was largely evened up.

"However, it soon became evident that the dealers were not wholly at fault for this situation. The fertilizer business in the county was an example of the slipshod methods

¹In *Country Gentleman*, May 7, 1921, by E. H. Taylor.

that were proving so costly. The survey showed that 345 persons were handling fertilizer, many of them farmers. In one township seventeen dealers received fertilizer shipments on the same switch track. This duplication of small orders made for a great deal of wastage. The same was true in respect to nearly all other staple articles bought by the farmers—many dealers handling the goods, having to anticipate the farmers' wants, selling in small quantities and having to carry the farmers' accounts. The interest on money the dealers had tied up in the surplus goods they were forced to carry and in the standing accounts was all charged into their prices, along with random losses they had to take from time to time.

“We've got to free ourselves from these makeshift practices. But how? Go into business for ourselves or seek the remedy through the dealers?” That was the necessity and the problem faced by the farmers. They decided on a solution that was a combination of the two alternatives. The merchants and elevator men in the eighteen townships were called in for a conference with the township farm bureau organizations. This proposition was submitted to them:

“The farm bureau, through its business director, will ascertain the wants of its members and pool their orders for such staple articles as fertilizer, seed, feed, coal, fencing and spraying materials. All the bargaining with manufacturers and jobbers will be done by the farm bureau. But we want you to see to the distribution. Our members will pay you cash, and when an order is placed each purchaser will make a deposit with you as a guaranty. We are thus relieving you of the work of merchandising, salesmanship, and collection, also saving you the necessity of anticipating our wants and carrying our accounts. Your charges should be reduced proportionately. Will you cooperate with us on these terms?”

“In all but three townships the dealers agreed to the plan. Where more than one dealer in a community

proved willing it was decided to apportion the business, or the farmers selected the coöperative dealer by vote.

“Manufacturers and jobbers were next approached. Some of them were skeptical and inclined to regard the move as an encroachment into fields where the farmer did not belong. But the farm bureau leaders presented thus the situation to them:

“‘We have round 2000 buyers back of us, and we intend to pool their orders. That means a big volume of business—desirable business, too, because it will be cash,’ they said. ‘That business goes where we can get the most favorable prices for quality goods. Do you want it?’

“Cash business on such a scale, of course, looked good. Most of the frowns changed to beaming friendliness. The matter of fertilizer came up first, for a big business in acid phosphate is done in Franklin County. Eighteen fertilizer concerns, four located in Columbus, were selling in the county. It was decided to give home enterprise first call on the business, provided it would meet outside competition. The four Columbus manufacturers were asked what concessions they would make for large-volume orders. Three agreed to submit price proposals; the fourth pooh-poohed the idea. He got no further consideration.

“In the first six months of the farmers’ new business policy 2800 tons of fertilizer were ordered at an average saving of \$1.75 a ton, or close to \$5000 altogether. Instead of being handled by 345 different persons it was distributed through only twenty-five dealers. The profits and labor of 320 persons were thus eliminated, and the margin of profit allowed the remaining twenty-five was cut in half. But because their business was greatly increased, their money turnover speeded up and their risks and labor correspondingly decreased, these twenty-five dealers really enhanced their profits considerably.

“‘How are these Franklin County farmers able to pay

cash for their coöperative purchases when in the past they frequently required the merchants to carry their accounts?' They are like farmers almost everywhere—short of money at certain seasons. That difficulty, too, was taken care of through the farm bureau's business program. All the country bankers were called in for a conference. The situation was thus explained to them:

"Farmers are in the habit of asking the merchants to carry their accounts. To render this accommodation the merchants must borrow from you bankers. The merchants charge the interest on these loans into the sales price of their goods, adding a little extra for the trouble and risk. The interest thus is paid by the farmers. Why shouldn't the farmers borrow of the banks in the first place and pay cash to the dealers, thus accomplishing a saving and reducing the complexities of business? Will you bankers lend to the farmers so they can pay cash to the merchants, or do you prefer to lend to the merchants so that they can carry the farmers' accounts?"

"That was a new view for most of the bankers. But they saw common sense in it. Almost without exception they agreed to become a link in the coöperative system. The last twelve months have been a bad time for bankers and farmers alike; loans everywhere have been hard to get. Yet I was told time and again that Franklin County banks were standing by the farmers and lending them money to finance their necessary purchases. I saw an order put in for 2000 rods of fencing by the farmers of Madison Township. Virtually every farmer wrote a check for his deposit. Two thousand rods form a minimum car lot. By pooling their orders in this way the farmers got a saving of nearly eight cents a rod. It was handled through one coöperative distributor at Groveport, who was allowed $2\frac{1}{4}$ cents a rod as commission—about half what he formerly took.

"The deposit paid down when placing an order is gen-

erally about 10 percent of the total amount. The rest is supposed to be paid on receipt of the goods. If cash is not paid the dealer is allowed 8 per cent interest for the time the account runs. But—and this is different from the old system—this interest is charged up only to the tardy individual and not spread into prices generally.

“The deposit protects both the dealer and our co-operative plan,” said Bryant. “Other dealers, learning of a coöperative order, would cut prices and might draw away some of our members were it not for the deposit paid down. Some merchants who are not working with us would be glad to take temporary losses if they could break up our plan by so doing and bring about a return of the old scheme of trading.”

“Recently Bryant announced through the business letter he sends out weekly to the township organizations that the farm bureau could obtain yellow locust fence posts at forty-five cents a post by ordering in a car lot. A small-town dealer not long before had ordered a carload of such posts, which he was selling at sixty-five cents. The day the business letter came out he dropped his price to forty-five cents. Bryant at once advised the farmers in that locality to buy of that dealer.

“The farm bureau issues a monthly exchange list, stating prices at which staple commodities can be obtained by volume orders. At one time last year this exchange list was credited with toppling feed prices in Franklin County an average of ten dollars a ton. Wholesale feed prices had declined generally, but the local distributors had been maintaining the old price levels, saying they had stocked up at high prices and could not afford to take a loss. However, the farmers were taking heavy losses on their crops at that time and felt the dealers should enjoy no special privilege. The coöperative buying policy provided the persuasion that caused the tradesmen to take their deflation medicine also.

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“We do not mail our business letters or exchange lists to dealers, but somehow they always get hold of the information,” said Bryant. ‘After one exchange list was sent out the largest seed house in the county lowered its price of timothy seed sixty cents a bushel. The indirect saving to farmers, through the influence we wield over prices, is beyond estimate.’

“The seven local Grange organizations in the county have established a like plan and elected Bryant their business director. He handles their orders through the same cooperating dealers used by the farm bureau. Through the farm bureau and Grange together the support of an overwhelming percentage of Franklin County’s farmers is secured for the improved business system, thus insuring its success.

“Coöperative purchases by farm bureau members totaled \$140,000 the first six months the plan was tried,” Bryant told me. ‘Our direct savings were about \$7300. It was an unsettled period, with prices fluctuating widely. This, together with our inexperience, held our savings lower than they would normally be with such a volume of business. Then, too, we really were only small buyers. This year we shall buy in much larger volume, because the farmers see the savings to be obtained thereby. We expect to order most of our coal supply this summer, when both fuel and transportation demands will be slack. The same policy will be followed with bulk feeds such as bran, cottonseed meal and the like. . . .”

It is a part of the duties of the county farm bureau business agent also to assist in the formation of local coöperative selling groups through which farm products may be marketed. These county units are planned to dovetail with the state selling organization and this, in turn, with the national.

HOME BUREAUS

The growing tendency to grant woman's work and interests equal attention with that of man has found recognition in the Farm Bureau. Already the question of creating a woman's department has been discussed in many states. The national organization has gone on record as favoring some such arrangement. It is believed that in those counties where a home demonstration agent is employed her work can best be directed and strengthened by a definite organization of women. In many activities the men and women would naturally cooperate.

The question of separate membership fees at once arises. New York State organizes what are known as Home Bureaus, composed entirely of women. In 1919 the New York State Federation of Home Bureaus was organized—the first in the United States. North Carolina followed this lead soon afterward and several other states have since organized state home bureaus.

JUNIOR FARM AND HOME BUREAUS

It is likely that the future will bring forth either separate organizations for the farm boys and girls, as definitely separated departments for boys and girls in the farm bureau organization. Entirely aside from the immediate benefits to the young people themselves, it is recognized that this plan offers an excellent means of assuring a constant supply of recruits for the Farm Bureau itself.

CHAPTER XII

THE COMMITTEE OF SEVENTEEN AND THE U. S. GRAIN GROWERS, INC.

FROM the first the farmer of the Middle West has looked to the Farm Bureau Federation for a better marketing system to handle farm products. In the strongest farm bureau states grain is the principal crop, so it was natural that attention should first be centered on grain marketing. Furthermore, various groups had already made good progress within state limits and, as we have seen, some 4000 farmer-owned elevators, mostly coöperative, were already in existence. Much dissatisfaction was expressed, however, by these coöperative elevator companies over the actions of the various grain exchanges in excluding them from membership, on the nominal objection that the coöperatives "rebated" through the distribution of profits back to members. Sharp criticism was also leveled at the speculative operations on the exchanges which were held to be responsible for the wide fluctuations in grain prices.

The various groups of local elevators, and even the state-wide groups such as the Farmers' Union of Nebraska, which handled many millions of bushels of grain, realized that they were not strong enough or big enough to command nation-wide respect. The logical solution evidently was to form a central organization or consolidation of some sort large enough in extent and strong enough to regulate the flow of grain to market.

Since the farmer produced all the grain—did not purchase it from any one else—the supply was automatically in his hands every year at harvest time. Why shouldn't he retain control of it and get the highest market price consistent with the world supply and demand for that particular year? Why should he turn the crop over to a myriad of dealers, and brokers and speculators to gamble with and manipulate and finally dispose of at a big advance to the ultimate consumer? These were the questions uppermost in the minds of thinking farmers and they were looking to the farm bureaus, particularly the American Farm Bureau Federation, for the answer.

Under these circumstances it would seem that nothing should have been easier than to effect a national, or at least a grain-belt, organization, including all grain growers. But the old, old difficulty in the farm organization field intervened. The leaders of the various sectional grain handling groups were not only unwilling to surrender their individuality but several of them had ambitions, distant but effective, of becoming *the* national grain handling organization. The Farmers' Union of Nebraska had just claims to preferential treatment because of its broad and successful experience in pure, farmers' coöperative grain handling. The National Wheat Growers' Association with headquarters at Wichita laid claim to the control of the bulk of the wheat of Kansas and Oklahoma. The Equity Coöperative Exchange of Minnesota and the Dakotas had developed a big business centered at St. Paul. The Missouri Farmers' Clubs owned a large percentage of the coöperative elevators in that state and, its officers at least, had very little use for the farm bureau which they considered an active rival. The Farmers' National Grain Dealers' Association

centering around Chicago owned, through its members, a large number of elevators, had been active in the field for years and had national aspirations. The Non-partisan League also had its own ideas as to how grain should be handled.

Then, too, the greatest diversity of opinions existed as to what a proposed national grain marketing system should involve. A large number, possibly a majority of the leaders at that time, thought that the grain exchanges should be closed up and done away with entirely, that all wheat should be pooled in great warehouses and doled out to consumers as needed. Many advocated the arbitrary fixing of the price at the bulk line cost of producing, plus a reasonable profit. The popular conception of the details of the principles of coöperation to be followed was extremely hazy and varied according to locality.

Finally the American Farm Bureau Federation called a general conference of grain growers for July 23 and 24 at Chicago.

Some 500 men representing State Coöperative Grain Dealers' Associations, Farmers' Unions, Farmers' Clubs, State Granges, Farm Bureaus, Societies of Equity, and the U. S. Department of Agriculture were in attendance. Aaron Sapiro, the legal representative of a number of the successful California coöperative groups, including the prune growers and some of the nut growers, fired the assembly to high enthusiasm by the story of California's success along coöperative lines. He precipitated a heated discussion by declaring that all growers must be tied up with iron-clad contracts. To Mr. Sapiro belongs the credit for instilling the idea that coöperative selling organizations to be successful must ordinarily be organized along commodity lines. That is, grain growers must have

one organization and livestock shippers a separate organization.

Discussion was free and all seemed agreed that some step along national lines should be taken. Organization rivalries and jealousies, however, prevented ready agreement to turn the whole problem over to a committee to be appointed by the American Farm Bureau Federation. It was finally agreed, however, that President Howard should appoint a committee of seventeen members including, as nearly as possible, representatives of all the major organizations participating in the conference.

This was the first big test of the American Farm Bureau Federation. If it could succeed in harmonizing all interests without appearing to seek its own aggrandizement, its position as spokesman for American Agriculture would be fairly well established. Already one of the larger national groups—The National Board of Farm Organizations, which represented the Farmers' Union—had practically bolted the conference and set up a rival committee upon President Howard's refusal to give them the right to name half of the committee.

The task before Mr. Howard was no easy one, and he devoted great care and thought and exercised high tact and diplomacy in making his selections.

The committee as finally constituted was as follows:

J. M. Anderson: St. Paul, Minnesota, manager of the Equity Coöperative Exchange.

C. A. Bingham: Lansing, Michigan, Secretary of Michigan State Farm Bureau.

P. E. Donnell: Waco, Missouri, President of Farmers' Grain Dealers' Association of Missouri.

John C. Boles: Liberal, Kansas, Member of Board of Directors of Equity-Union.

Wm. G. Eckhardt: Chicago, Director of Grain Marketing Department of Illinois Agricultural Association.

C. V. Gregory: Editor of *Prairie Farmer* and Secy.-Treas. of American Agricultural Editors' Association.

C. H. Gustafson: Lincoln, Nebraska, President of Nebraska State Farmers' Union, and President of Farmers' Union Livestock Marketing Association.

Wm. Hirth: Editor of *Missouri Farmer* and President of Missouri Farmers' Clubs.

C. H. Hyde: Alva, Oklahoma, Vice-President of Oklahoma Farmers' Union and in charge of State Union grain marketing activities.

Dr. E. F. Ladd: Fargo, N. D., President of N. D. Agricultural College and newly elected U. S. Senator.

George Livingston: Washington, D. C., Chief of Bureau of Markets, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

Don Livingston: Pierre, S. D., Director State Department of Markets.

H. R. Meisch: Argyle, Minn., President of Farmers' National Grain Dealers' Association.

A. L. Middleton: Eagle Grove, Iowa, ex-President Iowa Farmers' Grain Dealers' Association.

Ralph Snyder: Oskaloosa, Kansas, President Kansas State Farm Bureau.

L. J. Taber: Barnesville, Ohio, Master of Ohio State Grange.

Clifford Thorne: Chicago, Counsel for Farmers' National Grain Dealers' Association.

When the Committee held its first organization meeting Mr. Gustafson was made Chairman and Mr. Eckhardt Treasurer. O. M. Kile and C. E. Gunnels were appointed Secretary and Assistant Secretary.

The committee spent several months in deliberations, in visiting coöperatives in Canada, California, and various other places where notable successes had been attained, and in hearing experts of national repute on various angles of the problem. Among the experts who spoke before the committee and submitted to questioning were: Julius Barnes, head of the U. S. Grain Corporation during the war period of government wheat control; G. Harold Powell, manager of the California Fruit Growers' Exchange; Huston Thompson, chairman of the Federal Trade Commission; Leslie F. Gates, President of the Chicago Board of Trade; and Bernard M. Baruch, a notable New York financier and philanthropist.

Gradually the personal jealousies disappeared, the difference of opinion as to marketing methods gave way to a unity of expression, and on February 17, 1921, in Kansas City, the committee agreed upon a plan.

The essentials of the plan were announced by the Farm Bureau and a series of state meetings was next held at which members of the committee explained the main features of the plan and assisted in the selection of delegates to attend a convention at Chicago on April 6th to receive and, it was hoped, to ratify the plan reported by the Committee of Seventeen.

Many disturbing elements were still at work, doubts and dissensions existed, personal jealousies had not been entirely eradicated. There was yet serious reason to question whether the long, careful study of the Committee of Seventeen had been in vain or whether something new, and constructive, and satisfying would come out of it all.

Both because of the reflection of the spirit of the occasion, which President Howard's opening speech breathes

forth, and because of its keen analysis of the then existing situation we reproduce his address in full :

“This morning of April 6, 1921, marks sun-up for American agriculture.

“This meeting is convened pursuant to the resolutions adopted at the Grain Marketing Conference of July 23, 1920, called by the American Farm Bureau Federation. You will recall I was requested at that conference to appoint a committee of not more than seventeen men from the various farm organizations. This committee of seventeen was to make an exhaustive study of grain marketing, and when its report was completed I was instructed to call another conference of authorized delegates from the various groups to receive its report and act thereon. It is for the purpose of receiving and acting upon this report that we are met to-day.

“It was no light task which was placed upon me in the appointment of the Farmers’ Marketing Committee of Seventeen. It was necessary to make an equitable distribution amongst the different farm organizations, and also to secure a proper geographical distribution. I was from the first impressed with the necessity of appointing men who had had actual experience in marketing matters and who were thoroughly acquainted with the mechanics of grain marketing from the viewpoint of the producer. It was also necessary for these men to have had an intimate experience, not only in the mechanics of marketing, but in the actual application of those mechanical principles to our present in-vogue systems, in order that they might know their defects and intelligently seek remedies for those defects.

“It was necessary to avoid the appointment of men whose experience had been such as to obsess them with the idea that no system other than that in which they had individually been successful would succeed. Such narrowness of vision would have defeated the whole

thought of the conference of July 23. It was necessary to have men who, recognizing the importance and gravity of the conditions of declining markets and restricted credit which have confronted us in the past few months, would not be unduly hastened by those deplorable situations and make mistakes which could not easily be rectified. It was necessary to find men who in every case were willing to give the best they had in them of judgment and experience, but who would also 'in honor preferring one another' accept the best in every other thought and plan.

"Finally, this committee must have been made up of men free from class selfishness or consciousness—men who would go at the task with the broader vision of the welfare of the whole people of the nation, working not destructively, but constructively.

"Criticisms have come regarding the time which I personally spent in the selection of the committee, and in the time which the committee itself has taken to do its work. I make no apologies for my own deliberation in the appointment, and I want at this time most earnestly to commend the members of the committee for the careful and deliberate manner in which they have attacked their task. Every man realized the importance of his commission. Our present grain marketing systems have been seventy years in the building. That there is much of good in them none will gainsay. They were not to be lightly cast aside. An annual turnover of more than three billion dollars was at stake. To revise, to remodel or to reconstruct a business of such magnitude was an engineering feat of tremendous responsibility. It was not an over-night job. Except occasionally under direst distress, and then only by seemingly supernatural inspiration, have great and lasting tasks been accomplished without the greatest deliberation, and even the sweating of blood.

"A decade of hope mingled with despair, of determina-

tion balanced by caution, elapsed between Patrick Henry's 'Give me liberty or give me death' and the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. Years of experience marked the necessity for, and months of earnest and conscientious endeavor evolved the Constitution of the United States.

"For years the people of England suffered economic opposition and tyranny of overlords who ruled them without regard to price of that which was produced or the tax which they enacted. Finally, at Runnymede the Magna Charta was evolved recognizing the fundamental right of the people themselves.

"For years the American farmer has suffered from and objected to uneconomic and speculative marketing systems which have held him powerless. After days and nights—yes, weeks and months of careful thought and devoted study, the Committee of Seventeen, assisted by the keenest experts, brings to us this new Bill of Fundamental Rights for the orderly marketing of our products. To-day again we are at Runnymede. Countless thousands of farmers stand with upturned faces, buoyed by only one hope—that this meeting will evolve their Magna Charta.

"This right to follow our products to the manufacturer, processor, or consumer in no essential differs from the universally accepted right on the part of all classes of industry to consolidate capital and effort. We are seeking no class privileges. We are seeking a stabilization of market wherein the farmer gets the benefit of the economic working, not the effect of the manipulated working, of the law of supply and demand.

"A century ago our streams of commerce were but rivulets. Fed by unstinted fertility of virgin fields, the rivulets have become mighty streams. Strong men have guided the processes of their development who sometimes, for selfish ends, have not only failed to straighten the

currents and shorten the courses, but have actually forgotten the dikes and interposed dams to natural flow and development. The time has come to shorten the current's course, remove unnatural obstructions, conserve energy, prevent overflows.

"If selfish ends only were sought by the seventeen committeemen they would not have blazed the trail for a new marketing organization, but rather would have planned for the organized limitation of production, thereby increasing prices with smaller output; or by some means of monopolistic control would have endeavored to accomplish this same end. The fact that the plan itself is large in scope and comprehensive in detail indicates the desire and the purpose of the committee to prepare for a large and increasing production.

"Let no man say the farmers of America want to lower their production output. That would be contrary to the natural courses of our calling. The farmer wants to produce. He must produce. He insists that unnatural barriers to production be removed. The time has come in our national life when the consumer interest is only safeguarded by the adequate and economical distribution of things produced, so that the farmer may not only maintain but expand his operations. The most potent cause of our present social unrest and commercial stagnation to-day lies in the fact that there is no farm market. The farmer's purchasing power is gone. His prices are far below par. His costs of production are deep in red. His markets are gone.

"Do you want to know what will start again the hum of the mills and the song of the laborer throughout the land? I'll tell you: A prosperous agriculture. It is the foundation of all permanent prosperity and contentment. It has been so in all nations and ages. Delay in bringing about this speedy readjustment is fraught with untold dangers. You men who are leaders know as well as I the

temper of the farmer's mind. You know the breaking point is all but reached. Your responsibilities and mine must be squarely faced. The interests of the men with their feet in the furrows are entrusted to us in this reconstruction effort. We carry no white flag. Fear and jealousy and bickering amongst classes of our citizenry must give way to larger issues. Only that thing in our marketing plans—and, indeed, in our entire national structure—which will benefit all classes can be of lasting benefit to any. Only that which is fair and right can endure. Whatever is fundamentally wrong can never be right. Thus the report of this committee, which you are to-day charged with the responsibility of consideration, is of far-reaching importance industrially, commercially, and socially to the entire nation.

“Two years have passed—two summers and the lengths of three winters—since the signing of the armistice. Hope has succeeded hope that economic conditions would be speedily adjusted.

“We look back now to the war-time days and ask why war—always an abnormality—brought that which men called prosperity. It was because the abnormal demand called forth in all our citizenry their best brain and effort. Selfishness was submerged. In camp and in kitchen, on farm and in factory, we worked and fought together. We coöperated! Coöperation won the war! It brought success. Without it we would have lost. Do you tell me that coöperation in peaceful pursuits is not just as desirable and as efficient as in war time? Does only the god of war call out what is strongest and best in us? Does the dove of peace bring unrest and selfishness and discord? Such things must not be. The American farmer to-day in his demand for coöperative rights challenges all other peoples to come with him—and through nation-wide and world-wide coöperation replace abnormalcy with normalcy.

"We have all noted that already the report of the Committee of Seventeen has caused a 'stirring of dry bones.' Misrepresentation and unfair propoganda, already apparent, are to be met not in the spirit of unfairness, but with an absolute integrity of purpose and confidence in the survival of the fittest.

"The bar of public opinion will always render its final verdict in favor of him who honorably toils for and candidly espouses the cause of the greatest good to the greatest number.

"Let no one consider this report or this meeting as a pink tea party. Rather it is a Boston Tea Party. It is the manifest expression on the part of the American farmer of the necessity of coöperative development. This is our right—not merely our privilege. It is the first national step in sending to the rear the impedimenta of distribution adjusted for private benefit. Coöperation brings the producer individually face to face with the consumer. It profits both. More than profit, it makes contacts which result in the better understanding each of the other. It increases vision. It removes the farmer from the narrow path of the individual worker and gives him the realization that he is not an underling, but a world character. It does not seek selfish economic advantages; it does, in a very broad sense, stimulate character, promote citizenship. I am for it. And let me repeat, the combining of time and of effort, of capital and of commodity—coöperatively—in "c-o-o-p-e-r-a-t-i-o-n"—not "corporation," is not alone our privilege—it is our right.

"I cannot close without endeavoring to express that which words are impotent to convey—my individual appreciation and the heartfelt thanks of every farmer and farmers' organization to the Committee of Seventeen, individually and collectively, for this report.

"Your work has been done with a high regard of loyalty and devotion to the task in hand, and you have

made for yourselves, each and every one, an enviable position in the agricultural annals of our nation.

"But though much has been accomplished, there remains much more to be done. This report is but an arch through which we see the ever-widening margins of endeavors, achievements and progress. To reach these horizons, challenges the loyalty and cooperation of every farmer in America—every one. Only by sincerity of purpose and aggressive organization is the job to be put over.

"With full realization of the responsibilities of our citizenship—in full consciousness of our just rights and privileges, let us go forward."

The Committee of Seventeen summarized its findings as follows:

"Investigation conducted by this Committee convinces us that the fundamental reason for the lack of adequate profits in farming is a faulty system of marketing farm products. All other great industries merchandise their products under their own direction. They are fully informed as to supply and demand. They suit distribution to demand, thereby maintaining a fairly stable market price, without daily fluctuations, and with only very gradual seasonal fluctuations. The farmer, on the other hand, ships his grain on the markets without regard to demand.

"Grain prices in the United States are determined in a few large centers of distribution known as terminal markets. The market places at these terminals are owned, operated and maintained by private closed corporations or associations known as grain exchanges or Boards of Trade. Upon examination of the rules governing these associations and upon questioning their officers, we have learned that elevator companies, distributing earnings on basis of patronage, cannot become members of these

exchanges. The effect of this is the exclusion of such farmer coöperative grain dealers from the terminal grain markets of our country.

“The grain exchanges furnish the facilities by which speculation in grain and its products is carried on to an extent that almost staggers all human comprehension. We have, for instance, been informed from reliable estimates that the wheat sold each year in the wheat pit of the Chicago Board of Trade is three times the entire production of the world. The total grain sold on the Chicago Board of Trade annually is approximately fifty-one times the amount of grain actually shipped to the Chicago market, and this market dominates all the markets of the country.

“The inevitable results of this unlimited speculation are: First, constant manipulation of prices. Second, great losses to producers and the public generally.

“The credit facilities of the country are designed to meet the needs of business, with its quick turn-over, and, as recent experience has demonstrated, do not adequately take care of the farmers’ needs. It is often difficult for the farmer to secure sufficient credit to permit the orderly marketing of grain, fitting available supply to consumptive demand, this resulting in wide fluctuation in prices, to the disadvantage of both producer and consumer. The consumer’s price is based on the high point of the year, while the producer sells most of the grain at the low point.

“The only adequate remedy for the conditions set forth, in the judgment of the Committee, is for farmers to enter extensively into the business of grain distribution, merchandising grain as the products of other industries are merchandised. We have adopted a plan for coöperative grain marketing and financing for submission to our various organizations, which we believe will accomplish the desired results.

"We believe that the public will be greatly benefited by more stabilized prices for grain and its products, and we know that farm investments and the farmers' vocation will be made far more sound and secure thereby. We note with satisfaction and great pride the many benefits that have been brought to consumers and producers of grain by the farmer coöperative elevator companies of our country, the number of which is now over 4,000. We have taken the farmer coöperative institutions as the basic unit upon which to construct our marketing system.

"We deem the practice known as short selling of grain and other farm products a crime and have asked Congress to legislate against it.

"We are striving for the enactment of laws that shall open these grain exchanges and Boards of Trade to membership of farmer coöperative elevator companies distributing their earnings on a basis of patronage.

"We believe that grain should be distributed to the millers and exporters direct from country points in so far as this is possible, and the system of elevators and selling which we recommend has this end in view."

The plan presented and finally ratified provides: first, for a national sales agency—now known as the U. S. Grain Growers, Inc. Membership in this non-stock, non-profit organization consists of grain growers exclusively. Each grower must pay a ten-dollar entrance fee (not a stock sale) and sign a contract to sell his grain for a period of five years through one or more of several specified methods, all of which eventually place the grain in the hands of a national selling agency.

Local coöperative units or groups of units are to be utilized wherever available and in other cases local grain growers' associations are to be organized and coöperative elevators built as soon as possible.

Two contracts are provided, one running between the grower and the local coöperative elevator or grain growers' association, and the other between these local elevators and associations and the national sales agency.

The U. S. Grain Growers, Inc., is to provide :

- (a) Terminal sales agencies at the various markets.
- (b) Warehouse facilities at terminal markets.
- (c) A finance corporation.
- (d) An export corporation.
- (e) A market news service.

The contracts with the grower provide that he may, at the time of signing, elect one of the following methods of disposing of his grain :

1. Individual Sale.

- (a) For cash at a price offered by the Elevator Company.
- (b) By consignment through the Elevator Company to the National Sales Agency—control of time of delivery, shipment, and sale to remain with the grower.

2. Pooling Method.

- (a) Local pool.
- (b) Joint pool.

3. Export Pool.

- (a) Grower may elect to pool one-third and sell remainder in accordance with other plans permitted.

An effort will be made to get each member to pool at least one-third so as to make certain that the normal exportable surplus will be held in pool.

A further provision of the contract gives the grower the privilege of violating his contract by paying damages

of 10 cents per bushel on wheat and rye, 20 cents on flax, and 6 cents on all other grains.

The chief argument of the conference involved the question of compulsory pooling. Many felt that unless the control of all grain was placed in the hands of the national selling agency absolutely and without restrictions, the agency could act as little more than a brokerage house. Others felt that the state of the public mind toward monopoly was such that the purpose of the grain growers would be misunderstood and attacked if a compulsory pooling plan were adopted. It was also felt that many farmers might refuse to sign for a compulsory pool. The outcome was a compromise.

A charter under the laws of the State of Delaware was secured and by-laws adopted which provide for a democratic form of government through delegates and directors, voting strength being based on numbers of individual grower members represented.

C. H. Gustafson was elected president; J. M. Anderson, first vice-president; George C. Jewett¹ of Spokane, Washington, second vice-president; C. H. Hyde, third vice-president; Wm. G. Eckhardt, treasurer, and Frank M. Myers of Fort Dodge, Iowa, secretary.

Offices were at once opened in Chicago, and a campaign for membership started.

Shortly thereafter the financing branch of the organization was incorporated with a capitalization of \$100,000,000.

¹Mr. Jewett is manager of the Northwest Wheat Growers' Association.

CHAPTER XIII

OTHER ECONOMIC EFFORTS

THE apparent early success of the grain marketing committee encouraged the appointment of further committees of this type to consider the marketing of livestock, dairy products, vegetables, canning crops, and fruits. The conference of livestock interests, out of which the Livestock Marketing Committee of Fifteen developed, was held in Chicago on October 8th. C. H. Gustafson was made chairman of this committee, but otherwise the personnel was entirely distinct from that of the Committee of Seventeen.

When the conference of dairy interests was called in Chicago on May 3rd, a situation was found to exist which differed materially from conditions surrounding the marketing of grain or livestock. In the first place a national organization representing milk producers was already in existence and had but recently passed through a number of fights for better markets, from which it had in most cases emerged victorious. Furthermore, the marketing of milk is a sectional matter rather than a national matter; that is, the marketing organization must be built around a given market, usually a single large city, and may extend into parts of half a dozen states.

Milo D. Campbell, president of the National Milk Producers' Federation, showed a most commendable spirit

of unselfish coöperation. He appreciated the fact that the Milk Producers' Federation could not afford to turn over its problems and the results of its several years' experience to a committee inexperienced in milk marketing, but believed that a basis of coöperation with the Farm Bureau could be worked out.

Some difficulty was encountered in arriving at an understanding, but it was finally voted to ask Mr. Howard to appoint a dairy products marketing committee "with the advice and consent" of the National Milk Producers' Federation.

A conference of fruit growers was also held at Chicago and plans developed to improve fruit marketing conditions.

WOOL POOLS

As a result of the sudden drop in wool prices in the spring of 1920, various state farm bureau federations undertook to form pools to store wool and await a fair price. These pools were formed in practically all the heavy producing states outside of the western range country and the stocks of wool were held for a long period without any appreciable improvement in price.

At a meeting of the secretaries of the Mid-West farm bureaus it was decided to request Mr. Howard to appoint one member from each wool producing state to serve on a committee to consider the wool situation. Such a committee was appointed and Mr. J. F. Walker, president of the Fleece States Wool Producers' Association, was made chairman. This committee recommended that a national wool pool be established with a view to handling the nation's wool clip.

Mr. C. J. Fawcett, of Iowa, was placed in charge of this work at Chicago. Good work was done in connection with the emergency tariff on wool, and in consolidating some of the state pools, but the plan for a national pool was not put into effect. Sectional pools were encouraged. Many of the states eventually disposed of the wool held at considerable advantage to the members and have since made wool grading and pooling a regular part of their program or work. In many states hundreds of thousands of pounds of wool were made up into fine blankets, robes, and cloth, and turned over to the wool growers with most satisfactory results. In normal years the pooling of wool should prove quite profitable to members.

THE RAILROAD RATE CASE

In the summer of 1920, at the time when the Interstate Commerce Commission was considering the application of the carriers for a big advance in rates, representatives of dozens of industries appeared and endeavored to show why rates on the particular commodity in which they were interested should not be increased. Representatives of the railroads appeared with volumes of statistics to prove that a big increase—they were asking a 55½ per cent increase on all freight rates at that time—should be granted them. Clifford Thorne, the transportation expert employed by the American Farm Bureau Federation, was the only witness to appear on behalf of the public, present a statistical analysis of valuations, revenues, and expenses and prove that the increases asked were excessive.

The statistical tables and diagrams presented represented three months' work of several statisticians, but they

made a profound impression upon the Commission and that body's final rulings were in accordance with the more important principles set forth by Mr. Thorne. In particular, Mr. Thorne showed that the railroads were asking the guaranteed return on a valuation at least six billion dollars in excess of either the true value, the actual cost, or the market quotation. The Commission cut this valuation down to the extent of one billion seven hundred million dollars. The reduced profits this reduction in valuation allowed represented a saving to shippers and consumers amounting to approximately one hundred million dollars annually.

THE FAMOUS "PITTSBURGH PLUS" CASE

The Farm Bureau has actively protested against the alleged unjust system whereby the Steel Trust collects an extra rake-off on every ton of steel manufactured in the Chicago territory or in fact in any territory outside of the Pittsburgh area. Steel prices were, of course, formerly based on the costs of production at Pittsburgh, plus freight to the point of delivery. This was entirely proper while all steel was produced at Pittsburgh. But with the establishment of the great plants at Gary, Indiana, and throughout the upper lake region the same basis of charges was retained. Even though the steel might be made at Gary and delivered by truck in the next block the rate was the Pittsburgh price, plus the freight from Pittsburgh. And this, despite the fact that steel can be produced at Gary at a very much less cost than at Pittsburgh.

The Farm Bureau feels that it is conceivable that this

extra charge might have been permissible during the time that the Gary steel industry was establishing itself and while it was still impossible to supply the western demand from the Western factories. But that time has long since passed and the extra freight charge, amounting to \$5 to \$10 per ton, is apparently just so much graft that the Steel Trust is able to collect because of its monopolistic position in the industry. Apparently the independent companies have also been whipped into line and now content themselves with limiting production and collecting their share of the graft, instead of cutting prices and taking a larger proportion of the business.

It is this state of affairs that the legal department of the farm bureau is attacking, and backed by the support of this organization the Federal Trade Commission again took up the question of prosecution and called upon the Steel Trust to show reason why it should not be compelled to cease and desist from this unfair trade practice.

OPPOSITION TO THE SALES TAX

Concerning the entire question of taxation and the work done by the Federation in this connection previous to its consideration by Congress, Mr. Howard said before the annual convention at Indianapolis, December 6th, 1920:

“I consider that H. C. McKenzie of New York State has done a greater piece of work for American agriculture during the past year than has been performed by any other one individual.

“The National Industrial Conference Board is a powerful organization representing the large eastern business interests. When I learned that this organization was ap-

pointing a committee on Federal taxation to make exhaustive research and recommendations, I took the liberty to ask that agriculture be recognized on that committee. This request was granted and Mr. McKenzie was the man whom I selected.

"At that time the whole thought of the powerful business interests of the country was that our national taxes, totaling five or six billions of dollars every year, should be so readjusted that the burdens of taxation would be passed from those wealthy and powerful interests and individuals and transferred down to the consumer—the ordinary common citizen of the country.

"Mr. McKenzie, in the beginning of those deliberations, was practically the only person opposed to such a program, but I want to tell you that at this time he has the majority of that powerful committee with him, recognizing that it is a wrong economic principle to transfer the burden of taxes to those least able to pay."

Numerous other activities of more or less importance have been undertaken with varying degrees of success, but perhaps the biggest accomplishment of the first year of the Federation's existence was the winning of the confidence of both the agricultural interests and the general public. As Mr. Howard said in his annual address, "The real outstanding work of the year has been the confidence, and I use the word 'confidence' after careful thought, which we have succeeded in winning from the general interests of America. The character of the men who daily come into our offices is all the evidence any one needs of the progress of our work and the impression which the American Farm Bureau is making upon the people of this land."

CHAPTER XIV

THE WORK AT WASHINGTON

THE necessity for active work in the National Capital was early recognized by the officers and executive committee of the Federation. Immediately after the ratification meeting in March, 1920, the entire executive committee went to Washington to look over the legislative situation. Even before that date, however, Mr. Howard and Mr. Bradfute¹ had made several trips to Washington, particularly in connection with the proposed "daylight saving" law, the Cummins-Esch railroad act, and in furthering packer control legislation, and had made a tentative arrangement with Gray Silver to represent the farmers' legislative interests in Washington. Mr. Silver lived on a large farm just two hours' ride west from Washington and so was able, for a time, to look after the legislative work while still actively managing his farm. Soon, however, he found it necessary to give his entire time to the work at Washington, offices were opened, and on April 1, O. M. Kile was retained as assistant Washington representative.

From the very first the Washington office found itself extremely busy. In addition to the legislative activities it was necessary to make careful studies and estimates of

¹Mr. Bradfute was a member of President Wilson's Industrial Commission which met in 1919 and attempted to arrive at some amicable adjustment of the disturbed conditions confronting labor, capital and the public, as an aftermath of the war.

a number of pressing problems of large economic importance which naturally centered in Washington. The problem of getting more credit for the agricultural sections and the entire question of the Treasury Department's policy toward the farmer had to be studied. The location of the blame for rapidly falling farm crop prices and possible remedies for same also demanded attention. One of the most pressing problems throughout the first summer and one in which the farm bureau was able to offer material assistance was in connection with the transportation problem. Through constant daily touch with the Car Service Section of the American Railway Association and the Interstate Commerce Commission, both centered at Washington, the Farm Bureau was able to get cars to shippers in hundreds of cases where local and state efforts had failed. Some 118,000 box cars were sent West, empty, in special trains during July and August in an effort to ease the terrific demand on the part of grain growers who had no place in which to store their grain and depended upon immediate shipment to market.

But the chief efforts of the Legislative office were, of course, along legislative rather than service lines and the principal bills receiving early attention were the various packer control measures; the Capper-Volstead bill, designed to legalize coöperative marketing associations; the Wadsworth-Kahn bill, providing for the operation of the government nitrate plant at Muscle Shoals; the Truth-in-Fabric bill, providing for the honest labeling of woolen cloth so as to indicate the percentage of virgin wool or "shoddy"; amendments to the Federal Farm Loan Act; Rural Personal Credits bills; Federal Aid Road bills; appropriations for the Department of Agriculture and an appropriation of ten million dollars for the continuation

of the work on the government dam at Muscle Shoals. Later the emergency tariff, the permanent tariff, the Capper-Tincher grain exchange bill, farm financing measures and taxation became important issues.

Considerable reaction against ordinary "lobbying" methods was noticeable at that time in congressional circles and since the farmer should have no occasion for secret methods or political entanglements, a thoroughly open and above-board system of procedure was developed. The functions of the Legislative office as presented before the annual convention at Indianapolis in December were: First, to ascertain definitely, by referendum or otherwise, the farmers' attitude on pending legislation affecting agriculture; second, to thoroughly inform members of Congress concerning the farmers' legislative needs and requests; and third, to report to the membership fully concerning the support or lack of support of individual congressmen.

"Ours is not a lobbying campaign," said Mr. Silver. "We have nothing to 'put across' on Congress, in the sense ordinarily implied at Washington. But we do have a big educational campaign to put forth and the objects to be arrived at are big enough to enlist the best energies of the agricultural leaders in every state. By proper organization and coördination of efforts we can carry on such a campaign of ideas and information as to win Congress to the support of those principles essential to the adequate development of agriculture, which—as all must one day realize—are therefore essential to the permanent and highest development of the Nation."

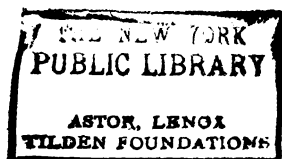
In the last session of the 66th Congress, that is, in the fall of 1920 and spring of 1921, the two big outstanding issues that overshadowed all others, at least so far as

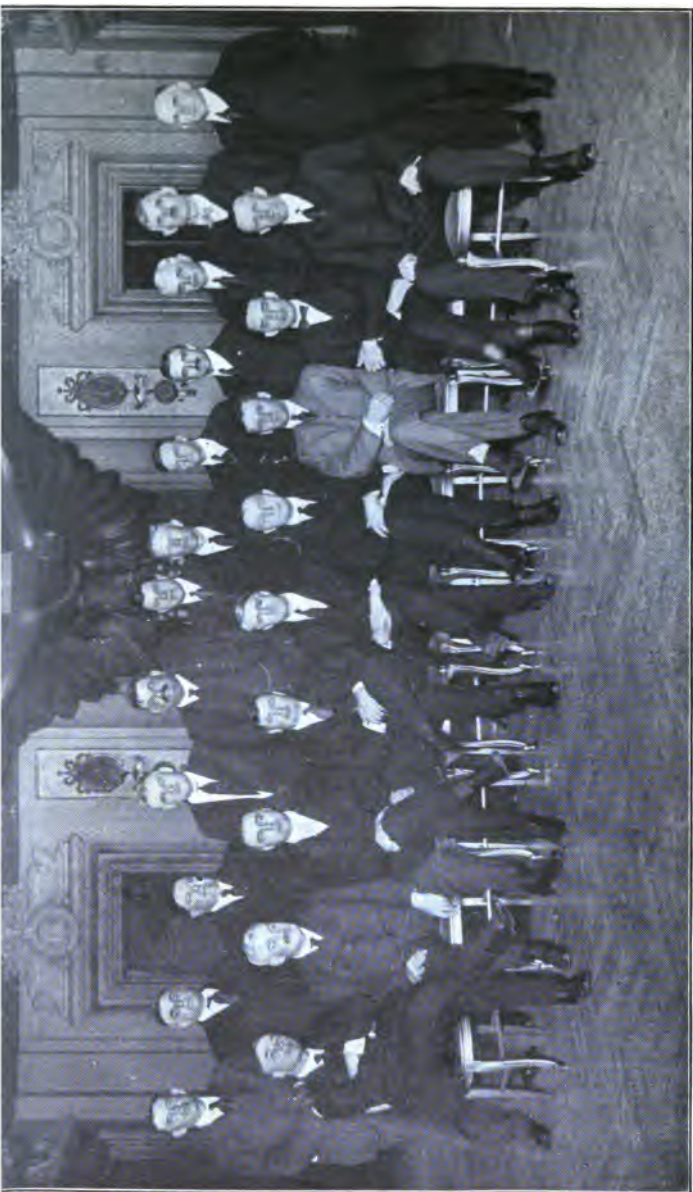
legislative strategy was concerned, were packer control, and the completion of the dam and production of cheap fertilizers at the government plant at Muscle Shoals, Alabama.

Other questions may have been of more immediate and possibly of more direct importance to agriculture than these two measures, but strategically these two questions were at the apex of the Farm Bureau phalanx. Both these measures encroached upon the assumed privileges of private business, and the big financial and commercial interests of the country were united to defeat them. Up to that time they had been eminently successful. The packers had by one device and another successfully evaded regulatory legislation for nearly a quarter of a century. Their representatives in Congress were well known and at least two or three of them held positions on the Agricultural Committee of the House and Senate to which all packer control bills must come before they could be permitted to go before Congress for consideration. A staff of packer lobbyists was on hand at Washington almost constantly and their influence on politics and legislation through banking, newspaper and various commercial connections almost equaled the strangle-hold the railways held upon legislative agencies in the 80's.

The Muscle Shoals nitrate development, which it was believed would practically revolutionize the production of nitrogen and phosphates and greatly reduce the cost of fertilizers, had been maligned and strangled in session after session until the little band of backers who had fought for years and practically exhausted their resources was almost ready to give up, when the farmers actively took up the fight.

And why was this Muscle Shoals development so bitterly opposed in Congress? Simply because the great elec-





BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE U. S. GRAIN GROWERS, INC., 1921

Standing—J. D. Pancake, Colorado; W. F. Schilling, Minnesota; J. K. Mason, Indiana; U. L. Burdick, No. Dak.; H. W. Coit, Texas; G. C. Jewett, Washington; R. N. Clark, Illinois; V. H. Smith, Oregon; R. C. O'Brecht, Kansas; H. W. Robinson, Ohio; J. T. Belk, Colorado; Fred A. Mudge, Illinois. *Seated*—H. W. Avery, Kansas; James Nichol, Michigan; W. G. Eckhardt, Illinois; P. E. Donnell, Missouri; J. R. Howard, President, American Farm Bureau Federation (not a member of the board), Iowa; C. H. Gustafson, Nebraska; A. L. Middleton, Iowa; F. M. Myers, Iowa; J. M. Anderson, Minnesota.

trical and chemical interests, the United States Steel Corporation, the Solvay Process Companies, the American Cyanamid Company and to a lesser extent the larger fertilizer interests wanted to tie up this great development for themselves or at least have it operated in such a way that their control over this fertile field of industry would be absolute. They had no desire to have the farmer in any way connected with the source of supply of what they foresaw must be a great and rapidly growing industry, since fertilizer must be depended upon more and more as an aid in food production.

It will be seen therefore that both these pieces of legislation were test cases. They were recognized by both sides in their true light, as a test between the strength of entrenched financial and commercial interests on the one side and the farmer, with such support as he could get from other consumers, on the other side.

The farmer had been unorganized and docile for so many years, and the rise of the Farm Bureau had been so rapid and so unheralded, that most members of Congress were taken utterly by surprise by the strength which these two measures suddenly developed. Not understanding and appreciating the forces they were opposing, and following their accustomed plan of rallying rather blindly to the support of any party measures that seemed endangered, a sharp fight suddenly developed and many friends of the farmer were committed against these farmer measures before they realized where they were being led.

In order to understand just how it happens in Congress that ordinarily in a contest between commercial interests and agricultural interests the former have their own way, it may be instructive to note the following:

In the 66th Congress there were 428 members and va-

cancies in the House of Representatives. Of these 234 were Republican, 190 Democratic ¹ and 4 were of varied affiliations. Of the total number of representatives, 215 represented the predominantly commercial section north of the Ohio River and east of the Mississippi. But of the majority party, that is, the Republicans, 161 came from the section specified. Thus it will be seen that the Republican party controlled the House and was itself controlled by the northeastern, or commercial and financial, section of the country. Just as long as the vote could be kept along party lines the group from the northeastern states could through caucuses dictate the actions of the entire House.

It might be thought at first glance that much of the territory north of the Ohio and east of the Mississippi is essentially agricultural and would therefore be guided by agricultural needs. It must be recalled, however, that even the agricultural territory in this area is thickly dotted with large towns and cities of considerable size. It is not at all surprising, therefore, that even in the agricultural sections the cities often dominate the political choice.

Then there is another very neat device in operation which gives the majority party full control in the House and helps build a permanent and autocratic machine. This is accomplished through what is known as the "Steering Committee." You will not find this committee listed in the official directory, but its rule is none the less potent on that account. It is selected by party caucus and in view of the territorial analysis given above it is not surprising to find the personnel as follows: ²

¹ Including 18 Tammany Democrats from New York City.

² At the opening of the 67th Congress the leaders were forced to yield to pressure from the West and added Sidney Anderson, of Minnesota, to the personnel of the Steering Committee.

Nicholas Longworth, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Samuel E. Winslow, Boston, Mass.

Thomas B. Dunn, Rochester, N. Y.

Martin E. Madden, Chicago, Ill.

George P. Darrow, Philadelphia, Pa.

Frank Mondell, Wyoming (Majority Leader).

At first thought it might seem that in Mr. Mondell we have a western man thoroughly sympathetic with agriculture. A closer examination, however, will reveal the fact that Wyoming is not primarily an agricultural state in the ordinary sense. It is pastoral. Large scale grazing is followed. Mining is also a major interest. Mr. Mondell, being the only representative from the state, stands in a peculiar position. While he is able to hold a large share of the agricultural vote of the state because of his patronage powers, his stand for a high wool tariff, and his personal merit, yet if he so desires he is comparatively free to trade his vote in Congress with the group in best position to give him further appropriations and privileges for his backers in Wyoming.

The Steering Committee is all-powerful. While the various legislative committees¹ are made up ostensibly by the Committee on Committees, yet the voting power is in proportion to the party strength in each state and the control of these committees; therefore, lies practically where lies the control that selects the Steering Committee. Any member incurring the displeasure of the Steering Committee finds himself with but little opportunity to secure desirable positions on the various committees, and without these positions members are unable to exercise

¹ Most legislation is largely enacted by committees. No bill can come before either house until acted on by the committee to which it has been referred after introduction. Unless reported favorably by the committee a bill seldom comes up for a vote.

much influence or power or to receive much prominent notice. Since these, together with patronage, are the tools with which each member expects to work in bringing about his reelection, it is evident why he is so much interested in securing desirable positions on the various committees and consequently why he feels compelled to follow the wishes of the Steering Committee. Having incurred the displeasure of that committee a member would find his every move blocked unless he could muster sufficient force behind himself, personally, to threaten an insurgency movement. This has happened once or twice in the last two decades, but scarcely often enough to act as an effective warning. We would not have it appear that the existence of a steering committee is in itself iniquitous. Something in the way of central control is in fact a necessity in handling so large a legislative body having such a diversity of personal interests. But it must be evident to even the uninitiated that where the control of this central group lies with any one type of special interests, the door is open for favoritism.

Another point which should be kept in mind is the fact that a great majority of the representatives are lawyers. While most of these members who come from the agricultural sections make every effort to keep in touch with agricultural affairs, and many succeed admirably, yet it must be understood that usually their chief interest is to play the game politically. If agricultural needs and political expediency conflict, the preference is all too likely to be with political expediency. Of the 435 members in the House during the last session of the 66th Congress, only 9 were real farmers.

Returning to the fight for packer control, we find in the report made by the American Farm Bureau Federa-

tion a rather complete statement of the methods employed to defeat the measure. This report was of a confidential nature when issued, and was sent only to state and national officers of the farm bureau. It was believed to be unwise at the time to make the full details public. The report started with the statement:

"In the history of the packer control bill we feel that we have a complete case. We can say without fear of successful contradiction that the packer bill failed because the Steering Committee of the House did not want it to pass."

The report then went on to relate how the known enemies of packer legislation on the Agricultural Committee of the House used all possible tactics to delay the bill and complicate its parliamentary status while before the committee so that even though a similar bill had passed the Senate it would never get a chance to come before the House. How this result was finally accomplished; how the Rules Committee, "which seemed to be controlled by the Steering Committee," was vainly importuned to report a special rule which would allow the House to decide for itself whether or not it would vote on the Packer bill; how the majority leader admitted that the bill would probably pass if given a chance for a vote, but refused to give it this chance; how he refused a night session for the consideration of this bill, although night sessions were held thereafter for the consideration of other bills of lesser importance; and how the bill finally died on the calendar after having passed one House and being denied admission by the Steering Committee in the other, was all set forth in the Farm Bureau report.

The fight on the Muscle Shoals proposition was the sharpest that Congress had seen for years, and as already

stated, came as a great surprise to most members. The incident which jerked the members of the House up short was the following letter written by President Howard and the Washington office and addressed to every member of the House:

January 5, 1920.

Dear Mr. _____:

All competent and impartial inquirers have agreed that the Muscle Shoals project would result in greatly increased nitrate supplies and materially decreased costs. Hence the farmer as well as the consumer is intensely interested.

It is evident to the farmer that the Muscle Shoals appropriation yesterday was defeated through the influence of large corporations who have a selfish interest in maintaining fertilizer costs.

The American Farm Bureau Federation has a paid-up membership exceeding 1,500,000 active farmers. These farmers expect us to keep them informed on legislative matters.

We regret that the vote yesterday was not one of record. In order that we may do justice both to Representatives in Congress and to our membership, will you kindly notify our Washington Representative—Mr. Gray Silver, 1411 Pennsylvania Avenue,—whether you voted for or against this proposition.

Thanking you for this favor, I am

Very truly yours,

AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION,

(Signed) J. R. Howard,

President.

Those Congressmen who had planned a quiet death for the measure and those members who had followed blindly, suddenly found themselves in a most uncomfortable posi-

tion. They must make some sort of showing by way of vindication. They therefore affected great offense at the wording of the letter and called Mr. Howard and Mr. Silver before an investigating committee. This investigation was conducted in a manner calculated to instill fear rather than to elicit information and ended in a farce. As a follow-up the Federation filed a full statement justifying the implied charges in the letter and as final evidence of the "influence" at work submitted an exhibit, which occasioned much merriment among members who were free to enjoy the situation. This exhibit consisted of a page of the propaganda issued by the American Cyanamid Company condemning the Muscle Shoals project, displayed in deadly parallel with the text of a letter written by a congressman to one of his farmer constituents explaining why he voted against the Muscle Shoals proposition. The identical phrasing in the two exhibits left no doubt as to where that particular congressman, at least, was getting his arguments.

The Farm Bureau's report to its state officers relative to the Muscle Shoals struggle was as follows:

"In the Muscle Shoals proposition we find a variety of motives which prompted the House leaders to work most vigorously for the defeat of the measure. In the first place we can trace the same allegiance to large commercial interests, since the American Cyanamid Company, the various Solvay Process companies, several of the largest electric companies, the fertilizer interests, and the U. S. Steel Corporation are apparently vigorously opposing the measure. In the second place, this matter to a considerable extent, was made a party issue, and forms an excellent illustration of how party politics is frequently allowed to defeat highly desirable legislation merely to make

a point for one or the other of the political parties. In this case the majority party had gone to extreme lengths to condemn the expenditures at Muscle Shoals. This was used as a campaign argument to point out the waste and inefficiency of the last administration. Many Congressmen made speeches throughout their territories condemning the Muscle Shoals project. They did not care, of course, to differentiate the expenditures made for war time purposes and the expenditures which resulted in valuable property which can be turned to excellent use and benefit for both food producers and consumers. Having condemned this project the leaders felt that it would place them in an embarrassing position politically to vote further funds for the utilization of the plant and power at Muscle Shoals. The chairman of the Appropriations Committee went to extraordinary lengths to influence votes to defeat this measure, both while the item was being considered by the Committee and later in conference and on the floor of the House. After the Senate had passed the \$10,000,000 appropriation for the continuance of the work on the dam and the leaders in the House were becoming alarmed lest the House likewise pass the measure, the chairman did the unheard-of thing of holding additional hearings before a conference committee. This hearing was conducted not for the purpose of securing any additional information regarding the merits of the project, but for the purpose of digging up any possible points of attack and of putting into the mouths of experts, statements which could later be used by . . . on the floor of the House in denouncing this project. Finally a night session was held at which it was announced this matter would be brought to a vote. Some excellent speeches were made in support of the measure by prominent members of both parties. It is commonly whispered around the Capitol that the leaders feared that the vote that night might carry in favor of the Muscle

Shoals project and therefore asked for adjournment. This is our belief and is substantiated by the fact that despite the fact that the vote was to have been taken that night the leaders moved adjournment at 10:30, while on the following night, on another subject, the session lasted until 11:50.

"When the matter finally came to vote in the House the most vitriolic speeches were made by prominent leaders . . . At the proper moment the majority leader, Mr. Mondell, arose and cracked the party whip. He consumed only three minutes of time, but in those three minutes he left no doubt in the minds of Republican members as to how the leaders expected them to vote. He said in substance, 'After all the criticisms we have made of the unwise expenditures of public moneys since the war began, we are not justified, any of us, in voting for this measure.'

"The interest displayed was most intense and it was noted that Senator Lodge, Senator Wadsworth, and Senator Phipps came over on the floor of the House to assist. Whereas the usual vote had been running a total of 250 to 300 votes, the total vote in this case ran 375. Every possible man was rounded up, many appeared for the first time in months, and the final vote stood 182 to 193."

The reaction that followed this sharp conflict with Congress was perfectly natural and well illustrates one of the most dangerous weaknesses of a widespread, rather loosely constructed farmers' organization.

Some of the congressmen from the agricultural sections who had been trying to carry water on both shoulders—that is, to get their votes from the farmers and to derive their power in Congress by being friendly to the financial interests—found themselves in a most embarrassing position. They very naturally tried to extri-

cate themselves by breaking up and scattering the force that was responsible for their embarrassment. Efforts to discredit the farmers' representatives were inaugurated. Certain congressmen returning home and being pointedly questioned about their failure to support agricultural legislation naturally tried to obscure the issue and defend themselves by suggesting that the farm bureau legislative representatives did not know their business, were wrong as to facts, used improper methods before Congress, etc., etc. In some instances attacks upon the personal character of the farm bureau representatives were made. In at least one state the suggestion was evidently made to a state farm bureau leader that if he would see to it that a change of attitude was made on the part of the Farm Bureau at Washington, he would be handsomely treated by the state political machine at the next election. Commercial groups affected by the proposed legislation did not hesitate to add their bit in the way of criticism, as occasion offered when conversing with farm bureau officials.

And so the poison was spread.

It will be seen that the opportunities for action along these lines were numerous, both through merely undermining the work of its representatives and through direct, subtle suggestions to its officers. The average farmer is, quite naturally, unfamiliar with legislative methods and practices, and therefore finds it difficult to answer offhand any criticism a professional politician may make.

In the particular situation under discussion the sowing of seeds of dissension was especially easy since few of the executive committee and practically none of the state officers at that time knew the situation at Washington or had a very clear idea as to what was being attempted and

the reasons for the opposition encountered. Certain written and verbal reports had been made, but it had been thought best not to circulate these widely. And then it seemed utterly impossible to convince men that the situation in Congress actually existed as described. Our ingrained conception of the democratic safeguards of a representative form of government are not easily uprooted and we are all of us, particularly those of us who have been reared in the democratic atmosphere of the open country, slow to believe that representation can sometimes, in effect, be so contravened. There is a certain awe-inspiring atmosphere about Washington and Congress and congressmen which makes the occasional visitor or the distant observer refuse to attribute anything but the highest of motives to our national lawmakers.

Personal rivalries and ambitions, and likes and dislikes among the officers and members of the Federation had, of course, a part in this disturbed situation, just as they always do in every situation involving the human element, but these are purposely omitted from this discussion. These personal features are something always with us, and while associations and organizations are more subject to their baneful influence than is private business, yet they must be accepted and our best efforts directed toward safeguards against the bad effects arising therefrom.

When matters had simmered along for a time they finally burst forth in the form of an investigation by a Farm Bureau sub-committee sent to Washington. A little later the entire executive committee went to Washington prepared to take the necessary time to look the situation over from every angle. Soon they saw matters in their true light. They found that there was no real re-

sentment on the part of wide-awake congressmen from the agricultural districts, except possibly here and there a man who had been caught in an embarrassing situation. On the contrary they found a well defined and growing disposition of congressmen to call on the farm bureau representatives for advice on pending or proposed agricultural legislation. At a big meeting held in the caucus room of the House and attended by about one hundred Senators and Representatives, the best of spirit was shown and most helpful discussions followed the speeches of President Howard and various other farm bureau officials.

The Committee realized also that it had not been as active in assisting in determining legislative policies as it should have been. Neither had it provided sufficient means of keeping state and county farm bureau officers and members informed as to progress in legislative matters so that 100 percent support could be counted upon when needed. Before adjourning the Executive Committee heartily endorsed the work of the Washington office and arranged for strengthening same.

The committee also discovered that on all big problems of the day—economics, foreign trade and financing, tariffs, transportation and the forerunners of the factors that affect business, Washington is not only the center of the United States, but actually the center of the world. At Washington are centered more than three hundred national associations representing every trade, every business, and every profession by which men make a living, and every principle and every cause and every movement which has a respectable group of advocates; there are centered the representative thinkers and many of the outstanding leaders from every state in the Union and every

country on the globe; there we find the personal correspondents of more than four hundred of the very best newspapers of the United States and the world, some having three to as high as seven men on the job constantly. More than half a million words for publication go out from Washington daily, nearly two hundred thousand words of this amount—the equivalent of three large books—going by telegraph. No matter what information one seeks at Washington, if he but knows how and where to look he will find a bureau, an association or an agency at which he can converse with one of the world's authorities on that particular subject.

A number of officers and committee members have stated that in their opinion the main office of the Farm Bureau Federation should be located at Washington and a strong office maintained at Chicago to conduct the organization and coöperative marketing work.

As the work proceeded at Washington and the influence of the Farm Bureau became more and more noticeable a most interesting development took place in Congress—a development which has caused the stand-pat political leaders no end of thought and worry.

Almost from the first the legislative representatives dropped the suggestion to loyal agricultural supporters, whenever opportunity offered, that there should be no question of politics involved when agricultural measures were up for consideration. No matter whether a member is elected on the Democratic ticket or the Republican ticket, if he comes from an agricultural district he should represent agriculture. It was also delicately pointed out that whenever the representatives from agricultural sections saw fit to stand together on an agricultural measure regardless of party lines, they could win, even though

the entire remainder of the House should be against them.¹

The Senate, being on a different basis of representation and therefore more largely from agricultural sections was usually more tractable on agricultural measures and the agricultural group more willing to stand as a unit for agricultural measures.

Finally as a result of a series of helpful conferences at Farm Bureau legislative headquarters, several senators, including Senator Kenyon of Iowa (Republican), Senator Smith of North Carolina (Democrat), and Senator Capper of Kansas (Republican), took the lead and got together a band of twenty-two senators from the South and West, pledged to stand for agricultural legislation regardless of party lines. The other members of this original band were Norris of Iowa, Caraway of Arkansas, Gooding of South Dakota, Ladd of North Dakota, Hareld of Oklahoma, Bursam of New Mexico, Fletcher of Florida, LaFollette of Wisconsin, McNary of Oregon, Harris of Georgia, Kendrick of Wyoming, Harrison of Mississippi, Spencer of Missouri, Heflin of Alabama, Stanfield of Oregon, Norbeck of South Dakota, Sheppard of Texas, Jones of Washington, and Watson of Georgia.

A similar movement was fostered in the House among the newer members. Representative L. J. Dickinson²

¹ This was true in the 66th Congress and the House on this basis was practically equally divided in the 67th Congress.

² On May 1st, 1921, the full agricultural "bloc" in the House consisted of A. P. Nelson of Wisconsin, Frank Clague of Minnesota, James G. Strong of Kansas, James H. Sinclair of North Dakota, Guy L. Shaw of Illinois, Henry B. Steagall of Georgia, Homer Hoch of Kansas, Fred B. Gerner of Pennsylvania, John W. Summers of Washington, John H. Smithwick of Florida, Philip D. Swing of California, L. J. Dickinson of Iowa, Claude B. Hudspeth of Texas, Robert E. Evans of Nebraska, Richard N. Elliott of Indiana, John D. Clark of New York, Samuel M. Taylor of

of Iowa took the lead and in coöperation with the Farm Bureau developed a definite organization.

By May both groups were in good working order and were in constant conference with the Washington office of the American Farm Bureau Federation, which is their recognized clearing house for agricultural information. Within another month these agricultural "blocs" began to make themselves felt, and by the middle of June they were in effective control.

The Farm Bureau, being moderate in its demands, got practically everything it asked for. In rapid succession were passed the Capper-Tincher Grain Exchange control bill, the Packer control bill, the Federal Aid Road bill, and the various Farm Financing and Crop Exporting bills. In addition the plans for a sales tax were blocked and full tariff protection on agricultural products was demanded and in most cases secured.

All known tactics were employed by the former leaders in Congress to break up this agricultural alignment. The best gifts within the control of the Party were held out temptingly to the moving spirits in the agricultural groups if they would but desert or default. But these methods would not work. The alignment held.

Panic-stricken at the turn affairs had taken, the old-line leaders tried to adjourn Congress to some later date, in the hope that by that time they might have the situation more nearly in hand. But to their discomfiture they discovered that they could not even adjourn until the agri-

Arkansas, F. B. Swank of Oklahoma, Edward T. Taylor of Colorado, Olger B. Bartmess of North Dakota, William Williamson of South Dakota, Edwin S. Brooks of Illinois, Marion E. Rhodes of Missouri, William C. Lankford of Georgia, Burton L. French of Idaho, Charles A. Christopherson of South Dakota, John G. Ketcham of Michigan, Roscoe C. Patterson of Missouri, Ladislas Lazaro of Louisiana, and Charles L. Faust of Missouri.

cultural "blocs" with their controlling votes gave consent on condition that the pending legislation affecting agriculture first be disposed of.

On August 28th, the Washington correspondent of the *New York Times* gave full credit to organized agriculture in the following language:

"The most forceful group influence in national politics to-day is that of the farmers' 'bloc' representing about one-third of the population of the nation, in the opinion of many observers here, who say that the strength of the farmer vote in national affairs is more apparent now than at any previous time. They add that it has won one victory after another until it is the only recognized voting group that is able to upset political traditions.

"The forces representing the different activities of the farmer, more powerful in Congress than organized labor, are credited with dictating terms to the Republican Party representatives engaged in writing the schedules of the tariff. . . .

* * * * *

"Those who observe the rise of political movements say that the American farmer is the most powerful factor in politics. They predict that if the farm 'bloc' in Congress does not become too zealous with its power, it will hold the balance of power for some years, and be able to force any party to enact legislation beneficial to the 'farming industry.'" . . .

The city press has had much to say regarding the agricultural "blocs," and has offered much advice as to the dangers involved. Editors have referred significantly to the fate of the supporters of the People's Party, who left the ranks of the regulars in the early 90's to rally to the farmer's cause. These editorials, for the most part, how-

ever, fail to note that the members of the agricultural "blocs" have not attempted to form a new party. They are just as good Republicans or Democrats as they ever were—better, in the sight of their agricultural constituents. Neither have they fully appreciated the fact that one of the big reasons why this group has been so successful is because every measure asked for has been in the interest of the general public no less than of the farmer.

But the new situation is causing the old regulars in politics, particularly in the commercial centers of the northeastern quarter of the country, to ponder well.

PART IV

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

CHAPTER XV

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN ORGANIZATION

ENEMIES of the Farm Bureau have sometimes endeavored to make it appear that a group of designing men deliberately seized upon the county and state farm bureau units as developed by the agricultural extension forces and created therefrom a national machine for their own uses. Even casual study of the foregoing pages must show the error of any such assertion. The spontaneity of the growth of the central organization is, in fact, one of its important indications of strength. Nothing could better show the widespread feeling of actual need for some sort of active organization among farming interests. This constantly recurring manifestation as exemplified in the case of the Grange, the Alliance, the Farmers' Union and now by the Farm Bureau, would seem to be conclusive evidence of the actual desire of farmers to link themselves together for the accomplishment of certain more or less definitely expressed ends.

The earlier growth of the Farm Bureau—that is, up until the time of the formation of the national federation

—was from the bottom up rather than from the top down. Local groups developed in the counties and put through county programs of work. Later it was found that many activities were state-wide in nature; state federations of the county units followed and state programs of work were developed. Following that it was an easy step to national federation in order to put into effect a program nation-wide in activities.

This has not been the history of the development of many of the farmers' organizations of the past. All too frequently the building has been from the top down and organizations of this kind have usually soon come to be mere skeletons supporting sets of officers, but having little active membership. It has been said that one of the few things that can be successfully built from the top down, is a grave. The thought implied applies with special force to farmers' organizations. The early troubles of the Grange were in no small degree due to the fact of its organization from the top down. An ambitious national program of work was undertaken before state and local experience had been acquired and seasoned leaders developed.

It should be noted at this point that following the federation of the original twenty-eight fairly well organized state farm bureaus the organization work has been fostered in most of the remaining states of the Union, and to that extent is subject to the same criticism of being organized from the top down. In most of these states, however, the local county farm bureau units were already in existence and it was more nearly a case of simply getting together than of superimposing an organization upon the community. In no state was organization undertaken by the national office except on invitation of the farmers

themselves. In fact, the organization has sometimes been criticized for not following a more vigorous policy in unorganized territory.

Undoubtedly the greatest source of strength possessed by the Farm Bureau and the feature which makes it different from all other farm organization attempts, arises from the interrelation and interdependence of the county agricultural agent and the local county farm bureau. The county agent in the beginning developed the county farm bureau because he needed it as an instrument through which to work in carrying out his educational program for the county. The Farm Bureau grew and developed functions entirely separate and distinct from those associated with the county agent, and now it needs the county agent to act as the visualizing, stimulating force on the job 365 days in the year, actively engaged not only in promoting agricultural educational work but in keeping alive interest in the Farm Bureau—the instrument through which he works. The two are inseparable if either is to be effective, even though no organic connection exists.

It cannot be emphasized too often or too strongly that the strength of the Farm Bureau depends upon the strength and loyalty of the local county units. Most of the national farmers' organizations that have failed continued long after their local membership had fallen to pieces, but the strength and activity of the local membership is an unfailing index to the actual strength and influence of the national organization. Because the local units of the Farmers' Union have fallen to pieces the national body is to-day but a shell, and such strength as it has comes from those states where the local units are still active. Because the National Grange had as one of its basic principles the systematic stimulation of its local

units, it not only survived the shock of failure brought on by other causes but has since made steady, consistent growth and has regained practically all the ground it once lost.

When the local farm bureaus were small and consisted of only a few hundred men, leaders in their communities, intent upon carrying out a program of agricultural betterment, contact with the county agent was frequent and interest was kept at a high point. Each member felt that he had a definite part to perform in the program and he felt a certain responsibility to the community. Especially during the latter part of the war period when Red Cross drives, food production campaigns, and Victory note subscriptions were actively pushed through the county farm bureaus, every member felt a certain pride and responsibility in belonging to the Farm Bureau.

But now that the activities of the county agent have again been more largely confined to strictly educational efforts, there is danger of lack of active interest unless definite plans are made to provide a purpose and a program that will bring members together at regular intervals, not because they think they ought to attend but because they feel that there is work to be done in which they must take a part.

It is the old, old story familiar to every preacher who has ever guided the destinies of a church in a country town or small city. When the congregation is working hard to get together the means to build a new church the minister preaches to record attendances, Sunday after Sunday, even though the meetings be held in a barn. But once the new structure is completed and the mortgage burned, interest begins to wane and each succeeding Sunday more and more of the beautiful new pews are empty. The wise

minister who has learned his lesson keeps his congregation building in one way or another all the time.

Here and there a county farm bureau has employed a business manager whose program of work should, and often does, include arrangements to get members together in regular meetings over the county and carry out plans involving constant activity of the membership. The occasional meetings for the purpose of assembling coöperative orders for fertilizer, or fencing, or feeds, are good but they are not sufficient. Members soon accept the benefits of coöperative buying as a matter of course and forget that it is only their active support of the farm bureau that makes this possible.

To date the national farm bureau organization has done but little to stimulate local activity and most of the states have made but a small start in this direction. If the history of other organizations is any criterion, careful attention must be given this feature of the work or sooner or later membership renewals will suffer severe declines. Referendum votes on the prominent national questions of the day, when properly conducted, serve the double purpose of maintaining local interest and of creating strong support among the membership for any legislative or economic program that may be undertaken by the central organization.

There is reason to believe that the farmer is to-day better prepared for nation-wide organization than ever before. In the first place the years of educational effort put forth by the agricultural colleges and extension services have had their effect. Men take a broader-minded view of matters, both technical and economic, than ever before. Better informed local leaders are available. The leaders trained in some of the older farm organizations are among

the best available for the launching of this new organization.

The advances made along coöperative lines in the past decade or so, show that changing conditions have caused the average farmer to lose a part of his feeling of absolute independence. He has apparently concluded that there is such a thing as too much independence. The fact that the average farmer has made somewhat better financial returns during the past ten years than formerly, might suggest an even greater degree of independence to-day. And in a sense this is true. But financial independence, better roads and cheap automobiles have given the farmer a little more time to look about, and he has not only lost much of his former aloofness born of suspicion but has taken a wider interest in affairs and wants to take a hand in bettering matters if possible.

Furthermore, constant observation of the success of the methods employed by organized Capital and organized Labor have instilled into the farmer's mind certain principles of organization which he is more willing to accept now than formerly. Appreciation of the fact that large salaries must be paid in order to secure and hold good men as officers and experts, is not so rare as formerly. While the idea that only farmers can handle the affairs of an agricultural organization still persists, yet there is a more noticeable tendency to employ experts to carry on definite features of the work. Men trained along transportation lines are employed to handle the transportation problems; men with broad economic training are to study the pending questions of an economic nature, high grade legal talent is employed and it is presumed that men with broad marketing experience will conduct the coöperative marketing enterprises of the newer organizations. Some mis-

takes have already been made by the farm bureau by not adhering to this principle. The lesson has not been fully learned as yet, but noticeable advancement over previous organizations in this respect is plainly apparent.

One of the things which makes this utilization of experts more largely possible in the Farm Bureau than in previous farmer organizations, is the development of the idea that the Farm Bureau must be well supplied with funds. Lack of funds has been a chronic ailment of most farm organizations. It is fair to say that no farm organization heretofore has had sufficient funds to conduct its affairs in a business-like way. Credit for foreseeing the importance of adequate financing of the Farm Bureau belongs to the middle western group of states that insisted upon this point at the organization meeting at Chicago. The idea of heavy dues in farmers' organizations was probably first successfully put forth by A. C. Townley in organizing the Non-Partisan League in North Dakota in 1915. Townley started with a six-dollar fee, soon raised it to nine dollars and later to sixteen dollars for a two-year period. This was the first recorded attempt to put a farmer's organization on anything approaching the financial basis enjoyed by the labor unions. Townley deliberately announced it as his intention to fight money (the grain and railroad interests) with money—and there was much of the same idea in the minds of the Illinois group of farm leaders who insisted on writing into the by-laws of the American Farm Bureau Federation a provision that would furnish adequate funds.

But even with the arrangements made—fifty cents per member per year—the first two years' work of the Federation was seriously hampered by lack of funds. It was only the strong financial condition of a number of the

state organizations that enabled the national to make an effective showing. The directors apparently failed at the outset to realize the size of the undertaking before them and the part money must play in its successful prosecution. Many mistakes were made which need not have occurred if sufficient funds and staff had been at hand. The second year's work was more liberally supported and henceforth the funds should be sufficient for all proper needs.

The difficulties of farmer organization on a wide scale are many and real. Kenyon L. Butterfield¹ summarizes them as follows:

"1. The Ingrained Habits of Individual Initiative.—For generations the American farmers have been trained to rely upon themselves. . . . So strong is this trait that it has produced in many cases a type of man actually unsocial, unwilling as well as unaccustomed to work with and for his fellows. . . . They have been known to repudiate the bargains of a coöperative pact for the sake of individual gain; such action was unsocial rather than immoral, but it is disastrous to organized effort.

"2. Financial Consideration.—Economic pressure has created a desire to secure financial relief or gain, and if coöperation would accomplish that it would be welcomed. But too often the large view of the ultimate value of the educational and social features of rural organizations has been lost sight of, and the farmer has refused to contribute to a movement with such intangible aims and distant results. He wanted to see where even his slight investment in time and money was going to bring him its harvest. Farmers have not appreciated what the economist calls 'culture-wants.'"

¹Cyclopedia of American Agriculture, Vol. IV, p. 290. By L. H. Bailey.

“3. Economic and Political Delusions.—The history of farmers’ organizations in the United States shows that the great ‘farmers’ movements’ have gained much of their power because there existed an intense belief in certain economic and political ideas which seemed to promise release from what the farmers honestly felt to be industrial bondage. These ideas strike at real evils, but in an extreme form at least proved inefficacious, are considered by students to be intrinsically unsound, and indeed have always been regarded by a large proportion of leading farmers as unsound. These delusions were mainly three: (a) that the middle man may be entirely abolished and that farmers as producers may sell to customers without the intervention of a third party, and as consumers may also produce for themselves coöperatively; (b) that unsatisfactory business conditions are almost wholly due to faulty legislation, and that a farmers’ party is not only feasible, but is necessary in view of the way by which other interests have secured special legislative privileges; (c) that a satisfactory money can be made by government fiat.

“These are set down as delusions, because as practical propositions they have not been made to work advantage to the farmers. It must not be supposed that all farmers’ organizations have urged these views, nor indeed that the majority of American farmers have believed in them. But they have all been proposed as measures of relief for real difficulties, they have never worked results permanently helpful to the farmers, and they have wrecked every farmers’ organization thus far that has pinned its faith to them.

“4. Lack of Leadership.—Organization among any large group of people means leadership. The farm has been prolific of reformers, fruitful in developing organizers, but scanty in its supply of administrators. It has had the leadership that could agitate a reform, project

a remedial scheme, but not much of that leadership that could hold together diverse elements, administer large enterprises, steer to great ends petty ambitions. The difficulties of such leadership are many and real. But it is to be doubted if the business of small farming is a good training-ground for administrative leadership. At any rate, few great leaders have appeared who have survived a brief period of influence.

"5. **Lack of Unity.**—A difficulty still more fundamental remains to be mentioned. The farmers of America have never been and are not to-day (1909) a unit in social ideals, economic needs, or political creeds. The crises that have brought great farmers' organizations into being have shown the greatest diversity of views as to remedies for existing ills, and, in most cases, there has not been in any farmers' platform sufficient unanimity over even a few fundamental needs to tide the organization over a time when a campaign of education could have accomplished the task of unifying diverse views."

In conclusion Dr. Butterfield says:

"Organization may be unwisely led, or advocate impossible things. This is a real danger: it is not a final argument against organization. The child blunders day in and day out in its education. A social group is sure to do the same. It is the only road to wisdom, social as well as individual. Education, experience and time will tend to adjust these difficulties and minimize the dangers."

The inherent weakness of all associations, as distinguished from corporations, lies in their looseness of organization and lack of permanent ties. A corporation once organized is likely to go on indefinitely, if it fills a real place in the world. Each shareholder must either stick with the organization *or get some one to take his place.* If he becomes dissatisfied with the management,

jealous of the power vested in certain individuals or disgusted with things in general, he can do either one of two things, namely, sell his stock and get out, or acquire more stock and take an active part in the management. In either case, however, the corporation goes ahead with its numerical and financial strength unimpaired.

In an association, on the other hand, when dissensions arise or dissatisfaction with the management develops, the tendency is to split off into factions. The strength and efficiency of the organization is weakened and the membership, noting the lack of results, rapidly falls away and only the shell of the former organization remains. In an association there is a less definite gradation of relative importance of individuals than is the case in a corporation. In the latter organization each stockholder knows exactly his relative importance by consulting his store of stock certificates. In an association all sorts of jealousies may arise through assumptions of personal importance which exists in the mind of the member only.

Associations of business men as well as associations of farmers are subject to the unavoidable weaknesses above noted, but the lessons of personal restraint and cooperation have been better learned by business men than by farmers and their associations are frequently more enduring than those of the farmers. Business men have usually had sufficient experience in cut-throat competition to appreciate the benefits of a protective trade association, and, then, the interrelationship of the various units in a given field of business is such that ordinarily it is possible for the association to mete out punishment in one form or another to such members as violate trade understandings or agreements for the sake of temporary personal gain. Furthermore, an association of business men is likely to

be run on business principles. This brings us to the second big weakness of all national farmers' organizations to date.

Any new agricultural organization that grows to a considerable size in a short space of time is certain to be manned by inexperienced officers and directors. Lack of experience in business methods is likely to be particularly noticeable. It is unreasonable to expect men whose entire experience has been along farming or small town business lines, to have a first hand knowledge of the principles and methods universally employed in large business enterprises. Such business training as the farm affords is, in fact, calculated to develop close attention to details and cautious action after long deliberation rather than a broad grasp of advanced principles, quick and decisive action and a delegation of all but the major features to experts trained to carry out plans and projects. The high grade, intelligent farmer, or man from any other art or profession, suddenly set down on a tremendously big business management job, is fortunate indeed if he so manages matters as to escape complete submersion in details within a few months. By the time he is absolutely forced to turn over parts of this work to assistants he has become so entangled in factional strifes and jealousies, in correcting some of the misstatements made in his first overfilled days and in smoothing out his earlier mistakes that his standing and efficiency have become seriously impaired. Too often it has happened that the president of a big farmers' organization must either be replaced every few years or he must adopt a policy of inaction. It should be made possible to retain a good farmer-leader without expecting him to be also a first class business executive. Two different types and temperaments are involved.

On the other hand it is essential to the democracy and

atmosphere of a farmers' organization that a real farmer be placed at its head. It is highly important that close touch with actual farm conditions be maintained and neither the members nor the general public with whom the organization must deal would feel satisfied of its bona fide character unless an actual farmer were in control.

The feeling is becoming widespread that there is only one satisfactory means of solving the dilemma above outlined. The actual business of a great farmers' organization—the organization work, the selling of the organization to the general public and to its own membership, the making of the budget and handling of the funds, and the execution of the program of work, must be placed entirely in the hands of technically trained experts big enough and capable enough to conduct the work in a thoroughly up-to-date business way. Many believe that a high-grade business manager should then be placed in actual charge of all and made directly responsible for the running of the organization, under proper relationships with the president.

This is the plan that has been found to work successful in business associations, and many advanced agricultural thinkers believe it is the only plan that will give continuous satisfaction with farmers' organizations.

This leads to the question of salaries. A business manager capable of carrying on the work of a national organization of farmers, such as the American Farm Bureau Federation, would be cheap at a salary of \$25,000 per year. A Washington representative of the organization must constantly cope with the legislative representatives of lumber, coal, railway, chemical, packers', mining and financial associations, receiving salaries of from \$25,000 to \$50,000 annually. Farmers' organizations simply must

pay high salaries and get high grade men if they are to meet these other interests on an equal footing. But apparently no farmers' organization will long pay these salaries to farmers. The members feel that the farmers who happen to be elected to office or employed for these high positions are no more worth the price than are they themselves. Sooner or later, therefore, the members attempt to force the salaries in these positions to about what a good high grade farmer could make at farming. On the other hand, these same farmer members expect to pay high prices when they employ a good lawyer or a good expert along any line. They know that he can get an equivalent amount from other sources and there is quite a feeling in these latter days that the farmer can "afford the best."

The dangers lurking in legislative activities have been pointed out in Chapter XIV. Legislative activity is, however, one of the most fruitful lines of endeavor and one of the very best with which to arouse and sustain interest among the membership. The dangers encountered by the Farm Bureau in connection with the Washington legislative efforts were largely due to the lack of a thorough-going system of conducting the legislative work of the Federation. Insufficient attention was given by the organization to the developing of a legislative program and no adequate means of keeping the membership informed as to the various steps taken was at that time provided. This made it easy for differences of opinion to arise and for serious dissensions to develop. The remedy for this difficulty is obvious and is now being applied.

The real danger in legislative work which farm organizations must guard against is the urge to form a separate party. Frequently in the past the provocation has been

great. Neither party seemed to give due heed to the farmers' demands. The formation of a separate party seemed the only way out. This plan has never yet been successful, however. The Populist Party made the strongest effort but it was hopelessly weak and even when united with the Democratic Party in its final campaign in 1896 was unable to win. Every farmers' organization that has taken an active, open, partisan part in a political campaign has gone to pieces shortly after the failure of the campaign. Long-standing, personal, political prejudices will not be laid aside, it seems, even for the sake of an agricultural victory.

The most successful plan seems to be to unite on principles and men rather than on party lines. Governors, senators, representatives, and legislators may be defeated or elected with comparative ease in agricultural sections where farmers unite on a candidate either in the primaries or at the final election. Any such action, of course, necessitates a complete information service as to the merits or demerits of every member of Congress and every member in the state legislatures. The strength of the Non-Partisan League was obtained, not as many suppose, by the formation of a new party, but by combining of farmers at the primaries to name the candidates of one or both of the well-established parties.

But perhaps one of the biggest dangers of all is inaction. Doing nothing is infinitely worse for the health of an organization than making a mistake now and then. When things go wrong and criticism begins to come in showers the temptation is for the officers to do as little as possible, hoping thereby to allow matters to blow over. The first question always asked when a farm organization is under discussion is: "Well, what have they done?"

If you have ever started in to enumerate offhand what even the best associations, either business or agricultural, have done within a period fresh to the memory, you will appreciate just how difficult it is to name specific and definite accomplishments that have an easily recognizable cash value. It may be perfectly evident to all who have followed the work that tremendous progress has been made, much of which has a cash value in the long run, but most of the good work of an association must be of an intangible nature and therefore not fully understood or appreciated by the average member. It may be seen therefore, how important it is to have a full program of active work under way at all times. Once the membership gets the idea that nothing is being done it rapidly dwindles until only a skeleton of officers remains. We have several notable examples of farm organizations in this predicament to-day.

Something has already been said about the dangers involved in commercial activities. The American Farm Bureau Federation has sought to avoid the possibility of the misfortunes which befell the Grange in this connection, through a system of organization which divorces the actual commercial activities from the parent farm bureau organization. We have seen how the local farm bureau in many instances has a separate club or group arrangement to handle orders independently of the farm bureau itself. In most states the buying and selling operations are done by separate organizations, as for instance livestock associations, or fruit and vegetable associations, or wool associations, or similar groups possibly organized by and always definitely associated with the central state Farm Bureau organization. In the case of the national organization we have seen how the entire

grain marketing program was turned over to the U. S. Grain Growers. The American Farm Bureau Federation acted merely as the organizing and supervisory medium. It is believed that this plan will avoid the pitfalls attendant upon coöperative marketing, so far as the farm bureau itself is concerned. Even if one of these state, or even national activities, does go to ruin occasionally, it need not carry the Farm Bureau with it. That particular activity will be only one of the many which the Farm Bureau is responsible for, and even with the debit entered against it the credits will still leave a good balance in favor of continuing the organization.

Still another weakness which a national farm organization must fight against, is sectionalism. We have noted the outcropping of this disturbing feature in the first Farm Bureau organization meeting. The special interests of the North are bound to be different from those of the South and New England ideas do not always agree with those of the West or Middle West. The South is interested in cotton; the North in corn and wheat. The New Englander wants the price of dairy feeds kept down; the Iowa producer wants them put up. The Kansas farmer wants cheap freight rates on wheat; the Virginia farmer is not so much interested, since he gets Chicago prices plus freight. The South has the negro problem; the Pacific Coast has the Japanese problem, and Texas has the Mexican problem. These sectional problems are further complicated by the existence of farm organizations preceding the Farm Bureau.

Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Virginia have strong state Farmers' Unions whose officers and membership are loath to resign in favor of the Farm Bureau. The Equity has strength in Wisconsin. The Non-Partisan League is

active in North Dakota and Minnesota. The Gleaners have long done good work in Michigan on a broad scale. The Missouri Farmers' Club has been fostered by private interests and since it is doing good work along coöperative lines, its officers can see no reason why it should go over bodily to the Farm Bureau. The Progressive Grange is active in the Northwest and most of the New England, North Atlantic, and Central States have strong Granges. In addition to the Farm Bureau, the National Grange, the Farmers' National Council,¹ and the National Board of Farm Organizations,² all maintain Washington offices and take part in legislative work.

As the representatives of the various sections become better acquainted with each other their differences tend to disappear and the value of one big, national, organization powerful enough to make itself felt in the halls of Congress and in the world of business, is a strong tie that binds the state units together. The separate state organizations can work on the special problems of the section but the national connection is needed to solve the bigger problems that affect all. The chief organization difficulty in the South at present is the handling of the negro problem and the necessity of changing over from the county council to the county farm bureau plan of local organization. The relationship with the newly developed American Cotton Growers Association, is also a complicating factor.

Some effort has been made to bring about a union of

¹The Washington representatives for the Washington State Grange, North Carolina Farmers' Union, and scattered groups of the more radical agricultural element throughout the United States.

²The central coördinating body for the National Milk Producers' Federation, the National Farmers' Union, the Pennsylvania State Grange, the Equity and several other smaller groups, formed July, 1917, shortly after the United States entered the World War.

the more or less conflicting agricultural organizations. It is recognized that the National Grange covers a different field and does not conflict with the farm bureau. In most states definite plans of coöperation between the Grange and the farm bureau have been worked out. Most members of the Grange are also members of the farm bureau.

Some of the other organizations, however, duplicate a part or all of the farm bureau work in certain states. In a few instances consolidations have been effected. The opportunity to join with a strong national organization is the argument that appeals to the more or less isolated state groups. In several instances the opportunity for consolidation existed but the farm bureau organizers were unable properly to follow-up the earlier negotiations and the opportunity was lost. Excellent work was done by President Howard in harmonizing a variety of interests and separate organizations into a single group to undertake coöperative grain marketing. This did much to affiliate some of these groups with the farm bureau. Now that the first rush of enthusiasm is over and the unlimited praise has died down it is doubtful whether much more progress in the way of absorption of existing state units will take place for a time. The tendency will be to wait and see how the farm bureau succeeds.

CHAPTER XVI

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES IN RELATIONSHIP TO COUNTY AGRICULTURAL AGENTS

THE question of the relationship of the county agricultural agent to the Farm Bureau has been a bone of contention ever since the farm bureaus began to attain strength and particularly since the movement has taken on national proportions. This has been the point of attack of rival farm organizations no less than by interests inimical to the farmer's ultimate welfare.

On the face of it, the argument that a man supported by Federal and local taxation should not be permitted to take an active part in the upbuilding of an organization of a private nature looks very plausible. It is freely admitted that the county agents are largely paid by public funds, and no one familiar with the development of the farm bureau will deny that the county agent has been instrumental in building the local county farm bureau units. So the basis for misunderstanding and argument is easily accounted for. That President Howard appreciates the important part which the county agent plays in the farm bureau structure is indicated by the greeting which he addressed to county agents on New Year's Day, 1921, through a publication issued by them. It read as follows :

"The county agent is the keystone of the federation. The architects of a great and enduring farmers' organiza-

tion builded to the eternal glory of America, will never forget the importance of that keystone.

"The American Farm Bureau Federation is exactly what the individual county farm bureaus make it. And the county farm bureau, I have found again and again and again, is just what the county agent makes it. Show me a weak, listless, ineffective county farm bureau and I will show you behind it a weak, listless, ineffective county agent—one of these harmless, meek, milk-and-water fellows forever reiterating that 'this is your bureau, members, and I am your agent; please tell me what to do, so that you will continue to pay my salary.' My point is that the county agent is set in positive position of leadership, whether he will or not. He can no more escape the responsibilities of leadership than can a line officer in the army. When the farmers find that they are investing their money in a hired man instead of a leader, they begin to regret that they pay him a leader's salary instead of a hired man's wages.

"I would urge every county agent in America to assume a position of real leadership in his county and to stand or to fall on his record as an organizer of farmers into a strong and effective county farm bureau. With strong county bureaus fired with a burning zeal for agricultural justice, our movement will challenge the admiration of the world.

"The county agent is the strong right arm of the American Farm Bureau Federation. I have found that by use the right arm retains and increases its power. We intend to make increasing use of the county agent. Therefore, we earnestly solicit his constant coöperation. Ask him to continue to help the American Farm Bureau Federation so that the American Farm Bureau Federation may help him and his people."

The relative importance of the county agents to the movement decreased as the local and state units became

stronger and stronger but their permanent value as an essential part of the system is fully recognized.

A committee of Congress—the House Committee on Banking and Currency—was the first to make a searching inquiry into this phase of the farm bureau development. This committee has jurisdiction over legislation affecting the Smith-Lever funds. The investigation was apparently prompted, however, by the growing importance of the Farm Bureau as a factor in legislative affairs (see Chapter XIV), and by the suggestion of one or more rival farm organizations alarmed at the rapid growth of the Farm Bureau.¹

Definite effort was made by officers of several state organizations, notably the Pennsylvania State Grange, to show that the Farm Bureau, aided by the county agents, was endeavoring to build up an organization which would react to the detriment of the Grange. Much evidence was brought out in these hearings and Congress, at least the members of this committee, arrived at a much better understanding of the interrelationship of the county agent and the farm bureau before the investigation was finished.

A portion of a speech delivered by C. E. Gunnels,² in 1920, while still connected with the Department of Agriculture, was put into the record and did much to show just why the farm bureau had been developed by the county agents and why then existing farm organizations did not meet the need. He said, in part:

“The farm bureau, therefore, as thus developed, is seen to be practically a public institution, developed at the

¹ It should be noted that representatives of both the National Grange and the National Board of Farm Organizations stated before the committee, in effect, that they had no quarrel with the Farm Bureau.

² Mr. Gunnels is now treasurer of the American Farm Bureau Federation.

direct suggestion of agents of the Government for the purpose of creating a channel through which the practical results of research work of the Government might with certainty reach the people for whom it was intended. As it has developed, it consists of a country-wide organization of farmers, with farmer officers cooperating under State and national laws with the county and the Federal and State Governments in the use of public funds for the employment of trained agricultural agents, and in some counties a trained home-demonstration agent and a trained boys' and girls' club agent, for the improvement of agriculture and home economics in the county, all in harmony with and in furtherance of the national agricultural extension act of 1914, the provisions of which every State, through its legislature, has accepted.

"Now, why did the Federal and State Governments develop such an organization? Why didn't they cooperate in extension work directly with the Grange in counties where the Grange is strong, or with the Farmers' Union in counties where the Union is strong, or with the Equity, where the Equity is strong? The reason is simple enough. Practically all of these are secret organizations, or class organizations, or commercial organizations. In a considerable degree they are exclusive organizations, and since the work of the Federal and State Governments is financed by all the people and in the interest of all the people, these institutions felt the necessity of developing a non-class, non-secret, non-commercial, and permanent institution open to all the farmers in the county, and through which all could find expression, and could deal directly and in an organized way with the State colleges and Federal Department of Agriculture.

"Besides, none of the farmers' organizations with which the department was acquainted had been developed with the idea of extension work in mind, and the agents of the Government hesitated to take up work with them,

or propose work to them which would necessarily involve a redirection of their organization, to say nothing of the jealousies which might have been created by apparent favoritism in the selection of one organization in preference to another."

While this investigation was still under way a publication known as *Industry*, published from Washington, made a vigorous attack on the Farm Bureau, based partly upon its relationship to the tax supported county agents, and partly upon the assumed intention of the Federation to corner the food market. In his indictment the editor asserted:

"First, the American Farm Bureau Federation is attempting to control—including price-fixing—the marketing and sale of the entire wheat crop of the United States, the basis of the nation's food supply.

"Second, the American Farm Bureau Federation is a quasi-governmental organization, as it exists to-day, functioning for class benefit *at the expense of tax-raised funds*, and through the instrumentality of tax-paid agents, a form of socialism or paternalism which has never before been extended into economic realms in this country, and therefore is a subtle and direct attack at the roots of Democracy and individual freedom of initiative.

"Third, the American Farm Bureau Federation is seeking to secure legislation not by presentation of facts and arguments, but apparently by threat and political influence.

"Fourth, the American Farm Bureau Federation apparently is already under the influence of a great bankers' organization, and is serving as its agent in the sale of Foreign Trade Financing Corporation securities to its members.

“Fifth, the American Farm Bureau Federation is seeking to absorb or monopolize all other farm organizations and secure autocratic spokesmanship for all agriculture.”

The next attack came in the form of a resolution introduced in Congress by Representative N. J. Gould of New York State, alleging that the American Farm Bureau Federation was endeavoring to enhance farm crop prices by limiting production and had attempted to “dictate” to Congress. He pointed significantly to the connection of the county agent with the farm bureau system. In a statement given to the press at the time of introducing his resolution Representative Gould said :

“Nothing will produce discontent, unrest, and even bolshevism quicker than any attempt to limit the food production of the United States, boost the prices and compel the people to pay double what they ought to pay for food. I shall insist upon this investigation in the next Congress, if it is not possible to have action taken at the present session, and I shall continue to act until this conspiracy against the people is ended. We can at least divorce those who inspired this conspiracy from the public payroll.”

The “conspiracy” referred to by Representative Gould was simply the data and conclusions sent out by the Federation tending to show that under existing conditions of costs and probable selling prices of crops it would be unprofitable to employ the usual means of stimulating crop production, such as by employing extra labor, using fertilizers, etc.

In order to illustrate how little Congressman Gould—himself a well-known manufacturer of pumps—really understood the situation, the Farm Bureau determined by

telegraph at once that the Gould factories had cut down production to a sixty percent basis. It was pointed out to him that the farmer cuts down production for exactly the same reasons as he himself had; namely, because there was insufficient sale for his products at a price that would cover the cost of production.

While all these attacks were plainly based on either ignorance or malice, yet it was plain that this question of the interrelationship of the county agent and the Farm Bureau was the point at which attacks would be launched, and that every effort must be made to safeguard this relationship by bringing about a better understanding as to just what it consists of. Finally at the May, 1921, meeting of the Executive Committee at Washington this matter was threshed over thoroughly with the officials of the States Relations Service of the Department of Agriculture and the following "basis of coöperation" agreed to:

"The County Agricultural Agents, Home Demonstration Agents and Club Agents coöperatively employed will be members of the extension service of the State Agricultural College and under the administrative direction of the Extension Director, and will carry on such lines of extension work as may be mutually agreed upon by representatives of the agricultural colleges and the farm bureaus or other like organizations.

"Since these county extension agents are part of a public service as defined in the Smith-Lever Act, and receive some part of their salary from public funds, they are to perform service for the benefit of all the farming-people of the county whether members of the farm bureaus or not, and are to confine their activities to such as are appropriate for public officials to perform under the terms of the Smith-Lever Act. The county agents will aid the farming people in a broad way with reference

to problems of production, marketing and formation of farm bureaus and other coöperative organizations, but will not themselves organize farm bureaus or similar organizations, conduct membership campaigns, solicit memberships, receive dues, handle farm bureau funds, edit and manage the farm bureau publications, manage or take part in other farm bureau activities which are outside their duties as extension agents.

"The county agents and other extension agents will coöperate with the farm bureaus or other like organizations interested in extension work in the formulation of county and community plans of coöperative extension work. It will then be the duty of the county agents under general direction of the Extension Director to take charge of the carrying out of such plans and to coöperate with officers, committees and members of the farm bureaus and with other organizations and residents of the county in the prompt and efficient execution of these plans.

"In order to do away as far as possible with the confusion now existing in the public mind regarding the organizations and work of the farm bureau as related to the county agents and the Extension Service generally it is recommended that hereafter in publications and otherwise the coöperative extension service shall be differentiated from the farm bureau work. That is, the farm bureau will have its relations with the extension service (consisting of the county agents, extension committee, demonstrations, etc.) as one of its departments. Other departments might be a publicity department which would prepare and publish a periodical (*Farm Bureau News*), press articles and notices, announcements of meetings, etc.; department of relations with marketing and other coöperative associations, etc.

"The work which centers in the county agents would be designated as the Coöperative Extension Service and the miscellaneous enterprises of the Farm Bureau as Farm Bureau work.

"The County Farm Bureaus have their state and national (American) Farm Bureau Federations, which are working on economic and legislative matters and are also promoting the extension service and agricultural education and research. These Federations are, however, not directly connected with the Extension Service and do not enter into coöperative agreements with the State Colleges and the Department of Agriculture involving the use of Federal funds and the employment of extension agents and the College and the Department are not responsible for the activities of the Farm Bureau Federations. There is, however, much advisory consultation between representatives of the Farm Bureau Federations and of officers¹ of the Colleges and the Department with reference to plans for advancing the agricultural interests of the States and the Nation."

Doubtless further attacks of a similar nature will be made on the Farm Bureau, but it is believed that gradually it will be seen that the farm bureau plan of cooperation with the government in the upbuilding of agriculture is as big a benefit to the governmental educational system as it is to the Farm Bureau. Neither could proceed nearly as well without the other. So thoroughly, however, has the Farm Bureau established itself now that the removal of the Smith-Lever funds would probably be made up by the Farm Bureau members themselves. In such an event none but members could call upon the county agent for assistance and the very farmers needing him most would be the ones omitted if, indeed, all did not soon join the Farm Bureau.

¹Dr. A. C. True, Chief of the States Relations Service of the Department of Agriculture, is an honorary member of the Executive Committee of the American Farm Bureau Federation and attends most of the meetings.

Since any effort on the part of Congress to eliminate Smith-Lever funds would very likely be the signal for a united uprising of farmers to combat this plan, it is unlikely that any serious attempt will be made in this direction in the near future.

CHAPTER XVII

THE FARM BUREAU COMPARED WITH THE GRANGE

A STUDY of the earlier objectives and methods of the Grange show a striking similarity to those of the Farm Bureau. In view of the later experiences of the Grange in endeavoring to carry out its program, a somewhat detailed comparison of the points of similarity and discussion of dissimilar features should prove of value.

It should be mentioned at this point that there is practically no conflict between the Grange and the Farm Bureau. The fact that one of the active organizers of the first county farm bureau and the president of this first bureau when it came under full farmer control was also the master of the county grange, indicates clearly that the two organizations occupy different fields of endeavor even though existing side by side in identical territory. It is safe to say that well over half of the membership of the National Grange is also connected with the Farm Bureau. In a number of states the membership of the Grange has increased decidedly during the past two or three years when farm bureau membership campaigns have been at their height in those same states. In a number of the strongest Grange states, notably Ohio and New York, carefully coördinated programs of coöperative work have been developed between the two organizations.

In a general way the present work of the Grange may be said to be social and educational, while that of the Farm Bureau is educational and economic. This definite division applies only where both organizations exist side by side in the same territory. Where either is absent the other extends its lines of work to include some of the normal functions of the unrepresented organization. Since the Farm Bureau usually has a considerably larger membership and a much greater fund to spend than has the Grange—even in the strongest Grange states—the Farm Bureau is ordinarily much more active and maintains a much larger central business organization. The Grange's strength now lies largely in the active social and educational interest which it maintains in its local units, and in the interest aroused through its state and national legislative activities.

The founders of the Grange planned to make it a social and educational organization just as the founders of the county farm bureau idea had in mind principally a means for educational work. But, as we have seen, this idea was soon departed from in both cases. The urge towards economic efforts was too strong to be resisted in 1873, even as it was in 1919. By the time most of the state units and the national federation of farm bureaus had been formed, economic effort was the chief aim.

In the case of the Grange the organization was unprepared and untrained for the work and proved unable to guide a safe course. As we have already noted, its destruction was almost complete.

Kenyon L. Butterfield¹ says in this connection:

“The causes of this rise and decline are fairly clear. The Grange was set before the farmers as a fully or-

¹Kenyon L. Butterfield, in Bailey's *Cyclopedia of American Agriculture*.

ganized piece of social machinery at the precise time when they most keenly felt the need of such an organization. They rallied to a standard that seemed to promise relief from their grievances.

“The causes of decline lay in an overestimation of the power of any organization to procure legislation that would correct the evils complained of, and, indeed, an undue reliance upon legislation itself as a cure for the trouble; in the fact that many unwise attempts at business coöperation failed ingloriously; and in the inability of the order to assimilate at once such tremendous increases in membership. Members came more rapidly than they could be educated to the real work of the Grange and trained to patience and self-control. Grange organizers were paid for their work and probably set forth unwisely the possibilities of the order. Many farmers joined expecting an early and large financial benefit. The Grange thus became first the organ and then the victim of a great reform wave among the discontented farmers of the land.”

There seems no doubt but that the immediate cause of failure was the rapid extension of business activities. In 1883, just long enough after the crash of the Grange coöperative business enterprises to give a perspective view, Worthy Master Y. J. Woodman,¹ of Michigan said: “The principal cause of failure was in placing business enterprises backed by the funds of the State Grange into the hands of agents who were wanting in business experience and qualifications necessary to manage them. . . . It cannot reasonably be expected that persons who have had no practical experience or special training in mercantile business, milling, or manufacturing can be qualified to successfully manage such enterprises.”

¹Semi-Centennial History of the Grange, Dr. T. C. Atkeson.

Lack of experience and failure to apply good business methods may be set down as the broad underlying reasons for the failure of the early and highly promising Grange effort along coöperative lines. There is no question but that the Farm Bureau has a greater body of experience to draw from. Men are available to-day who have had extensive experience in actual coöperative marketing on a wide scale. Great numbers of farmers have had from two to twenty years' experience with the local features of coöperative marketing. More general information on economic affairs is at hand. More satisfactory laws governing competition are on the statute books now than in the earlier days of the Grange. Undoubtedly there is to-day a better understanding and appreciation of the necessity for business methods in farm organization work.

The Farm Bureau has avoided some of the more obvious mistakes made by the Grange. The financing, for instance, has been better handled. More adequate funds have been provided and a more uniform income insured. The Grange in its heyday was misled as to its actual financial strength by the large amounts accruing from original installations of locals. A fee of \$15 was collected from each local at the time of granting the charter. When, therefore, more than 10,000 locals were installed within a single year, a large but illusory fund was created. When new installations stopped this income stopped. The annual dues were ordinarily only one dollar per member.

The Farm Bureau has already shown the same tendency toward internal disturbances as have been noticeable in the Grange and all other large farm organizations. In the Grange some of these disturbances were fomented

by interested parties outside Grange ranks while others originated from within. Even the so-called "family quarrel" of the Grange in its earlier days seems to have been helped along, if not actually started, by designing outside interests. An author writing on this subject says:

"It seems significant that it was immediately after this achievement (the victory over the railroads) that the 'family quarrel' of the Grange flared up, probably made in the enemy's country and certainly fostered and inflamed by the inspired press of the time, which sowed dissension in the Order by hinting at the misuse of funds and denouncing the exclusiveness and extravagance of the National Grange. The outcome was a division of Grange funds and the crippling of the Grange treasury, doubtless aimed at by the 'capitalist press,' and even worse, the creating of distrust and suspicion on the part of the farmers whose confidence in the Order had been rudely shaken."

Although the Grange made a constant fight against the dangers of political entanglements it was never entirely successful in keeping free, and what was probably one of the most serious splits in its ranks had as its underlying cause political considerations.

When the great political ground-swell of the early 90's got under way the Grange was just beginning to recover its breath after the knockout blows of 1876-77. It had again accumulated a strong, solid membership in a number of states and had built something of a reputation for sane, conservative, agricultural leadership. The Alliance had a frankly political leaning and as we have seen (Chapter II) formed the basis of the Populist Party. Finally in the campaign of 1892 it practically lost its or-

ganization identity and its members and leaders plunged into the thick of the reform political fight.

The pressure brought upon the Grange at that time and during the next four years to take up the farmer's fight through political means was tremendous. To the third party enthusiasts, here seemed the chance of a generation for the farmer to grasp the reins and effect the many reforms he had been clamoring for during the preceding two decades.

Because the Grange did not grasp at this apparent opportunity there were those who accused its officers, first, of lack of aggressive leadership and, later when the fusion of the Populists and the Democrats had taken place, of actual collusion with the leaders of the Republican Party.

It so happened that beginning with the year 1889 and continuing for the ensuing nine years the Master of the National Grange, J. H. Brigham, was from Ohio, the home of both Marcus A. Hanna and William McKinley. Mr. Brigham was a man of commanding presence, a real statesman and had served a term as a Republican member of the Ohio senate. All this served to lend color to the charge that the Grange was being delivered, soul and body, to the Republican Party. Free silver was, of course, one of the big issues of the day, along with other money questions, some of which have since been generally admitted unsound. Worthy Master Brigham found himself unable to subscribe to some of the measures then being advocated and said so from the public platform. While subsequent events seemed to establish more firmly the belief that Mr. Brigham was working for personal political ends, yet unbiased men of keen insight who went through the fight believe to-day that he was simply en-

deavoring to keep the Grange off the rocks of political entanglements and unsound economic theories. In endeavoring to disarm the radicals he had to himself appear reactionary.

In 1891 Worthy Master Brigham said in the course of his annual address: ¹

“A majority of the members of the National Grange may indorse certain propositions involving questions of political economy affecting the material interests of citizens, such as tariff or finance, but in no case is a member of our Order bound by such action or expression of opinion unless his own judgment shall approve.

“The membership of the Grange can be committed to no party, to no individual, to no religious creed, to no political theory or policy, by any act of any official, or by any resolution adopted by any subordinate, State or National Grange. Any other position upon these propositions means disintegration and death.

“This need not hinder discussion nor expression of opinion by members acting individually or collectively. All measures which are of especial interest to farmers should be viewed from all points. Give the people the benefit of any phase of opinion, and then they can draw intelligent conclusions.”

But with feeling running so high it was but natural that divisions among the membership should take place and Brigham's leadership was threatened. The officers of the Grange are elected by the votes of delegates, two from each state presenting evidence acceptable to the credentials committee. A state must have not less than fifteen active local granges in order to qualify with voting delegates. When the vote for officers became so close that the elec-

¹ Semi-Centennial History of the Grange, Dr. T. C. Atkeson.

tions were swung by one or two states, it was charged, and later admitted, that just previous to elections the national officers sent organizers into the weak states that were near the membership deadline, and where it was assured that delegates favorable to the reelection of Brigham would be provided, enough local granges were organized to bring the total up to the required standard. In those states where it was ascertained that opposition to the incumbent officers would be encountered, evidence was collected, if possible, to present to the credentials committee at the proper time to disqualify the voting delegates from those states.

No doubt, Worthy Master Brigham felt that the end justified the means. He believed that he must save the Order from radicalism by any means available. However that may be, he remained in office until appointed Assistant Secretary of Agriculture after the election of McKinley, when he was succeeded by Aaron Jones, a member of his own inner circle.

All this developed leaders of an opposing group and while the real split in the Grange did not come until some years later, yet the foundation was laid and some of the seeds of dissension were sown.

The real splitting off of the so-called "Progressive Granges" came in 1910 and was due to the failure of a more or less radical minority to put through a coup they had planned to capture most of the major offices and control the Grange. A number of the states that broke away from the National at that time have never fully returned to the fold although a nominal connection is maintained.

These experiences of the Grange in the handling of radicalism contain valuable lessons for every agricultural

organization of wide extent. It requires men of extremely keen insight and broad outlook to steer a safe course of leadership between the rocks of radicalism on the one side and the shallows of inactive stand-patism on the other side. It is most disconcerting, furthermore, to find that the guideposts are not stationary. The radical of to-day, in at least seven cases out of ten, is likely to be the merely progressive of to-morrow and in another generation the ideas he stood for may actually be considered reactionary by the more advanced social thinkers of that new day. This has been noted time after time by all careful observers. Yet without changing positions in the least a man may be in reality wrong to-day and right to-morrow. There is such a thing as getting too far ahead of the march of progress of the general run of society. A reform may be impractical of application to-day, and the tone of public opinion so changed within a few years as to make the new order entirely practicable.

Then, of course, there is always the radical here and there, and sometimes a great preponderance of him, who is advocating an unsound principle,¹ a principle which later experience proves to be unsound. The loose thinker and the demagogue can always get an audience and a following. To discriminate between the true and the false and pacify the ultra-radical while steering gradually away from the reactionaries requires true qualities of statesmanship and a high degree of skill in leadership.

¹ For instance it is popular to-day and always gets an enthusiastic response from an agricultural audience to say that prices of grain are held down until the farmer has been forced to sell to the speculator, whereupon prices then begin to advance. The fact of the matter is that a comparison of prices of wheat on the Chicago market at the time of threshing and for the following spring, averaged for the entire 49 years between the close of the Civil War and the opening of the World War, shows an increase in value

It is this quality, perhaps, more than any other one thing that has kept Samuel Gompers at the head of the American Federation of Labor for the past forty years. He has been frequently pushed by the radicals to the point of taking action which his better judgment told him was unwise. Yet even with these concessions to radicalism his leadership has been threatened at every election for a good many years past, by the faction which feels that his views are too conservative. His success in retaining active leadership through it all speaks volumes for his soundness of policy and understanding of human nature as well as mass psychology.

Mr. Gompers has never allowed his organization to be led astray by the third party will o' the wisp. Third parties present alluring possibilities to the reformer, but seldom materialize into anything of permanent value to an organization, as such. It has been frequently stated that third parties have never been successful in the United States. This is, of course, untrue. One third party has proved eminently successful and is now doing business on Capitol Hill. The Republican Party split off from the old Whig Party as a third party standing for abolition of slavery. If there had not also been a split in the Democratic Party at the same time, the Republican candidate, Abraham Lincoln, might readily have been defeated. As matters turned out he was elected and the Republican Party was made.

of approximately three percent—scarcely enough to pay for storage and shrinkage and allowing nothing for interest. The easy assertion about unduly depressed markets at about harvest time simply isn't true, but it sounds reasonable and has been repeated so often that it is now generally accepted without question. This, of course, has no reference to the many real marketing ills which coöperation will cure. Undue depression does, undoubtedly, occur on specific occasions.

It is quite conceivable that if the Grange had turned in whole-heartedly and helped the Populist Party, the latter might have come into power and been a dominant force in the elections of 1896. As it was, the successful party saw the handwriting on the wall and made haste to enact most of the reforms advocated by the Populists.

But let us assume that with the active assistance of the Grange the Populist Party should have won. Even with success crowning its efforts active political participation would very likely have been bad policy for the Grange. Feeling would have been generated to a high point and dyed-in-the-wool republicans and democrats among the ranks of the grangers would have attacked the grange for its partisan stand. Those favoring the Populist principles would have worked vigorously with the inevitable after-election slump in interest. The feeling would have prevailed that the very object of the Grange had been accomplished and its major usefulness had passed. Then again, sooner or later, the successful progressive party would have probably become the reactionary party and the job would have had to be done all over again. The Republican Party which started out as the most advanced of radicals on the slavery question has today become the "conservative"—some would say "reactionary"—party.

So either way you take it, active participation in partisan politics gets an organization nowhere in the end. If its party wins, its members look to the party rather than to the organization for strength and power; if the party loses, history has shown that the organization seldom survives the shock. An agricultural organization is on perfectly safe ground when it insists that the senators and representatives from agricultural districts shall truly

represent agricultural interests, and promptly retires those who refuse or fail to do this. In exceptional cases it may be necessary for state organizations to see to it that the right candidates are selected at the primaries, but these candidates should nearly always be from within the established parties.

The big lessons which the history of the Grange teach are (1) the necessity for regular, persistent, and consistent local activity in all the units which make up the State and National organizations, (2) the importance of guiding a course midway between radicalism and ultra-conservatism, and the value of entire freedom from political entanglements. Contrariwise, (3) the lack of organization experience and failure to apply good business methods are plainly shown to be dangers that may readily wreck any young and rapidly growing agricultural organization of wide extent, particularly if it engages in coöperative commercial enterprises. In this latter point the Farm Bureau's distinct improvement over the plan followed by the Grange lies in the fact that its commercial activities are conducted by units separate and distinct from the central farm bureau organization.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE FARM BUREAU CONTRASTED WITH THE NON-PARTISAN LEAGUE

THERE was probably never a more maligned organization of reformers in the United States than the Non-Partisan League. Its leaders and members have been charged with everything from disturbance of the peace to treason against the national government in time of war. A. C. Townley has been pictured by his enemies as an adventurer, a fanatic, an anarchist, a self-seeker, and an enemy of society; and by his friends as a clear-thinking, hard-hitting, far-seeing reformer and statesman who is leading the farmers of North Dakota and nearby states out of the wilderness of exploitation and oppression by capitalistic interests with which they have struggled for years.

It has been almost impossible for an impartial observer at a distance to get a true statement of the situation, so completely has the news been colored and so conflicting have been the stories circulated.

In endeavoring to form an estimate of what has taken place in North Dakota, the kind of men who led the movement and the significance of this development in its relationship to the broader agrarian reform movement now under way, we must keep in mind what Charles Edward Russell¹ so well says: "Good men, or those deemed

¹"The Story of the Non-Partisan League," by Charles Edward Russell.

good in the literature of the day, never revolt at anything. Without exception, every social or political reform has been effected by men whose motives and acts were fiercely assailed in their own generation and lauded by all mankind in the generation thereafter. No man ever attacked a vested wrong and escaped being pictured in his own time as a depraved and dangerous person. . . .

“John Wilkes was pilloried to all England as a monster of wickedness, but every reform he advocated was adopted within a hundred years of his death. William Lloyd Garrison was dragged through the streets of Boston with a rope around his neck, but hardly another name in American history is more respected to-day. As late as 1861 Wendell Phillips had to be protected by armed volunteers across Boston Common because of a speech he had made in favor of human liberty; there is now a great monument to him on the ground he trod that day. If Washington had failed he would have been pictured in history worse than Jack Cade, for all the English descriptions of him in his own time represented him to be a howling demagogue, abounding in wickedness and infamy. . . .

“The Populists were hooted and jeered from one end of the country to the other; most of them lived to see most of their doctrines adopted by the great political parties. In England the Chartists were hunted down and imprisoned; almost the whole Chartist program has since been made into English law.”

As Mr. Russell further points out, it probably mattered little as to just what form of organization or manner of procedure the revolt in North Dakota employed. “So soon as their revolting movement attained to proportions that threatened entrenched Privilege, it would have

been assailed on moral grounds. Men in great numbers that freely admitted the basic justice of the farmers' cause would have vehemently decried the tactics that the farmers pursued. Exactly as men say they are in favor of the right of workers to organize, but are opposed to unions, so in regard to the farmers, similar minds would say they knew the farmer had been badly treated, but this was not the way to redress their wrongs. If the farmer had confined his efforts to the economic field, he would have been told to go into politics. If he had tried to win free by political action, he would have been instructed to use only his economic power."

It may be worth while then to note, briefly, just what happened in North Dakota and to draw from the experiences of the Non-Partisan League such lessons as may be applied to the farm bureau movement.

Those who are still laboring under the propaganda-inspired illusion that Non-Partisan League leaders must of necessity be a wild-eyed, scatter-brained, rabid lot, would do well to make the acquaintance of Dr. E. F. Ladd, for many years head of the North Dakota College of Agriculture and now the newly elected Non-Partisan senator from that state. A kinder, gentler and milder mannered gentleman never lived, and his colleagues are rapidly learning to respect his keen intellect and clear-cut logic in the Senate chamber. Governor Frazier, who has served continuously as the chief executive of North Dakota since the Non-Partisan League came into control, is the very antithesis of wild-eyed radicalism. He was not even a delegate to the original convention that placed his name in nomination, and as was the case with Senator Ladd, hadn't the slightest idea that he was being considered. The offices have literally sought the leaders in

North Dakota, instead of the reverse which is almost universally true elsewhere.

It must be understood, however, that conditions in North Dakota were much different from those existing in most of our Eastern States, and what was a perfectly natural development in the Northwest would be a highly artificial and superimposed proceeding in the more easterly sections. North Dakota is almost wholly agricultural. Eighty percent of its population is on farms and another ten percent lives in villages of less than 500 inhabitants. Only ten percent dwell in cities and the largest city has only 22,000 population.

North Dakota interests are tied up completely with grain growing and marketing. The marketing has been dominated absolutely by the big milling, financial and railroad interests centered around Minneapolis. There seems to be no question about the flagrant injustices and actual thievery practiced by the large and firmly established interests. Many of the practices had been in use so long that the second generation had actually come to look upon them as right and proper.

Millers, bankers and railroads had grown immensely wealthy and the grain producers had become poorer and poorer. Despite the fact that most of the lands had been obtained almost free, statistics show that in 1915 more than two-thirds of the farms of North Dakota were mortgaged and more than one-fourth of the farmers were tenants on the land they tilled.

Regarding conditions as they existed, let us quote Senator Ladd:¹

"It is hardly too much to say that for a generation North Dakota was treated by great interests outside the

¹ *Congressional Record*, May 2, 1921.

State much as the Romans ruled their conquered Provinces. The financiers, millers, insurance men, packers, and grain-buying and railroad interests which centered in Minneapolis and St. Paul, looked upon North Dakota as their exclusive trade preserve and taxed its people all the traffic would bear. Discriminatory railroad rates, which frequently in years past averaged at least 40 per cent higher than charges on the same commodities in the neighboring State of Minnesota, made it difficult and almost impossible for North Dakota to develop its own industries, so that practically everything the State produced was shipped to the Twin Cities and Duluth and virtually all commodities consumed in the State had to be purchased from these outside points.

“This in itself was a very uneconomical system and not conducive to the development of the State’s prosperity; but in addition to this, the farmers suffered gross injustices in the marketing of grain, which composed their staple crop. Practically all the elevators in North Dakota were controlled by concerns closely connected with the Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce. Many of the banks in North Dakota also were owned by the same interests, and it was no coincidence but part of a settled policy that notes, mortgages and other obligations incurred by the farmers usually fell due in the fall of the year. This and a lack of storage facilities compelled the farmers of North Dakota to market their crop almost immediately after it was threshed, and for a period of thirty-five years price tables indicate that the grain from North Dakota was marketed when prices were at their lowest point.¹ in the year; but more than that, the buyers took advantage of the farmers in the matter of grades, correct weight, and dockage in their grain. . . .

¹ But not necessarily lower than the price which represented the later price minus carrying charges, although this, too, was frequently the case.

"The best illustration of the essential dishonesty of this system of marketing (which allowed the buyer to fix grades) was shown in 1916, when hot winds resulted in the production of shriveled kernels of wheat throughout North Dakota. The grain buyers announced that this wheat was unfit for human consumption and that none of the existing grades would cover the case. Therefore they said that the North Dakota wheat that year would have to be used for chicken feed, and special feed grades, of the A, B, C, and D classes, were devised to suit the occasion. Practically the entire crop of North Dakota wheat that year was purchased as feed—A, B, C, or D wheat, and the price of this wheat ranged from 40 cents to \$1.05 per bushel under the ordinary grades at which the farmers had formerly sold their wheat. As a consequence the farmers of North Dakota lost millions of dollars on that one crop, and their rage and chagrin can be imagined when it was afterward discovered that the mills of Minneapolis not only manufactured this wheat into flour but had the supreme audacity to claim superior quality for this flour on the ground that it was unusually rich in gluten—absorbed a large amount of water and made an exceptionally large loaf of nutritious bread. Copies of the circular letters which millers sent out to their trade advertising this flour came into my possession and enabled me to expose this gigantic swindle which had been perpetrated upon the producers of North Dakota. It was this fact more than any other that caused the farmers of North Dakota to enroll in the Non-Partisan League in such numbers."

But the farmers of North Dakota had been trying for ten years to get moderate reforms adopted by the usual methods. Back in 1907 the people of the State by a majority vote of 86 percent had instructed the legislature to provide the means and establish state-owned terminal

grain elevators. So completely was the State dominated, however, by officers and legislators—usually small lawyers connected with the Minneapolis interests—that by one trick and another, and in the face of overwhelming popular demands and even referendums, the demands of the farmers were frustrated throughout nine long years. In 1915 when a delegation of some 300 farmers went to Bismarck to ascertain why the legislature would pay no attention to their demands, so secure did the long entrenched interests feel that one of the old guard legislators in the course of a speech against the terminal elevators turned to the farmers patiently sitting in the gallery and arrogantly said: "You farmers go home and slop your hogs. We will make the laws in this State."

Even then the farmers might not have turned to political means to enforce their will had it not been for another obstruction placed in their way by the same private interests who saw their profits threatened. The Society of Equity had been making considerable progress along the lines of coöperative marketing and despite the most unfair and un-American persecution by the Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce had succeeded in handling a considerable volume of grain on a coöperative basis for North Dakota producers.¹

Suddenly the Attorney General of the State of North Dakota brought suit against the Society of Equity to force it to dissolve and cease to handle grain. Previous to this many farmers had favored coöperative methods rather than state ownership of terminal elevators and mills. But this bit of autocratic impudence, plainly prompted by the monopolistic grain interests, was the

¹"The Story of the Non-Partisan League," by Charles Edward Russell.

straw that broke the camel's back. They would stand no more. They would organize and take matters into their own hands.

And organize they did. With most amazing rapidity and thoroughness.

The League really won its victories at the primaries. So thoroughly did they control the primaries that the great majority of their candidates were placed on all tickets in the field and after that it made little difference to them as to the final vote. Their campaign was strictly non-partisan. They dominated the Democratic primaries the same as the Republican.

Because of the holdover senators it took two years to get complete control of the state government—legislative, executive and judicial. When this was finally accomplished the legislature proceeded to do a thing unique in American political history; namely, to enact every measure to which the members were pledged.

In a legislative session lasting less than 60 days every measure for which the people of North Dakota had labored so long was written on the statute books. A state bank was created, a state hail insurance department and state home-building association were authorized and bonds voted for the carrying out of the industrial program. In addition this legislature passed seventeen correlated laws tending to improve the status of labor and of women and children in industry.

All the legal batteries that could be mustered were turned loose against these laws but they have been sustained successively by one court after another, including the United States Supreme Court, and at last North Dakota is carrying out her constructive program.

Every trick and device that human ingenuity could

devise has been brought to bear upon these various enterprises to compass their defeat. The State government and the League were made to appear as disloyal and unpatriotic during the World War. Through a misunderstanding the League did perhaps make one misstep early in the war but this was rectified and not a state in the Union holds a better record for subscriptions to the various war enterprises and the cost of individual enlistments in North Dakota was the least of any state in the Union. One county had not a single man drafted—all eligible volunteered.

Consistent, paid, newspaper propaganda of a most damaging nature has been kept up persistently by the interests affected. The bonds of the State have been decried and refused by the usual financial agencies all over the country, and a most despicable and criminal attempt was made to wreck the State bank.

But through it all the League has made steady progress and has already reaped financial benefits from its various projects which amply justify their existence. Gradually a better understanding is coming into the minds of fair-thinking people and while it is still entirely possible for the warring interests to mortally cripple the North Dakota system, yet every day, apparently, adds to its strength. This is not the place to discuss the legislative program put through in North Dakota but we respectfully commend it to the attention of forward-looking legislators as embodying many principles conducive to more equitable social and economic interrelationships.

The Farm Bureau has no present intention of using Non-Partisan League methods. The Farm Bureau is endeavoring to bring about the necessary reforms by the application of economic methods, by education and by

influencing legislation in a peaceable sort of way. It is well to remember, however, that the farmers of North Dakota started out with this same intention and it was only when their efforts in that direction were persistently thwarted that they organized for more militant methods.

It is probable, moreover, that even if it were so desired it would be impossible for farmers to do on a national scale what has been done in North Dakota with its heavy preponderance of agricultural interests and its peculiarly acute problems. The League has not been particularly successful in its organization efforts outside of North Dakota, Minnesota and Montana.

The League has pointed out wonderfully well the plan for farm organizations to use when it becomes necessary to elect a set of state officers and legislators or to replace an unworthy United States senator or representative. Simply capture the primaries in both of the leading parties and then all questions of politics are eliminated and the farmer wins, regardless of the final tally of the votes cast in the regular election. Where the farmer vote is not strong enough to do this a united fight can be made on "men" rather than party lines. Voters are becoming more and more independent of parties every day.

Farm organizations are indebted to the League, and specifically to A. C. Townley, for another important lesson, too. Townley it was who first convinced large bodies of farmers that a cause that is worth fighting for is worth supporting financially. He made farmers see that if their organizations are to have anything like the force of labor organizations, the farmer must be willing to pay at least a fraction of the regular dues paid by all union plumbers, or ditch-diggers, or laborers of whatever sort. This payment, in turn, creates greater loyalty on the part

of the member. He has a bigger stake in the undertaking and takes a greater interest. But it also involves an obligation on the part of the organization. The member has a right to expect results.

By entering so completely into political activities the League has encountered dangers which the Farm Bureau should be able to avoid. With political power so readily within their grasp there is constant temptation on the part of the League officers to use the organization for their own political advancement. While the organization is new and motives are pure and high no bad effects are likely to follow such developments, but later the danger of corruption for personal gain is too great to be overlooked. Too great a voting majority cannot be long trusted even in the hands of friends.

On the whole it would seem that the course laid out by the Farm Bureau Federation, while not as direct and swift-acting as that followed by the Non-Partisan League, is much safer and more in accord with our American ideals and in the end can be quite as effective in bringing about the desired reforms.

CHAPTER XIX

SOME LESSONS FROM ORGANIZED LABOR

THE question is often asked, Why is it that labor unions have been able to grow and prosper for years, while so many farmer organizations have languished and died? Why is the bricklayers' union or the machinists' union more successful than the average farmer's organization?

The answer is very simple when a close comparison of the two types of organization is made. The laboring man's union prospers because it serves a definite, concrete, personal, local need. The workman sees and feels its influence and protection on every hand. If a union printer feels that he has been unfairly treated by his foreman, or by the proprietor, the "father of the chapel" calls a meeting at once, right in the shop. The other members of the printers' union employed in the shop discuss the merits of the case and decide what action is to be taken. Incidentally the "father" may at the same time collect the month's dues¹ to turn over to the city or local union. If it is decided to seek redress the matter will be taken up at the next meeting of the local or city union. If a strike is called the city and national union send money for living expenses until the strike is settled.

¹Dues vary from \$1 to \$5 per month, depending upon the trade. Additional dues are collected for various special types of benefits, such as old age, sickness, etc.

If a union machinist needs a job, his local union will get one for him. If he wants to go to another city, the union will advance him money for travel expenses if desired. Upon arriving at the new location, does the machinist begin to search among the various shops for a job? He does not. He simply goes to union headquarters and the business agent after consulting his lists writes out a letter which the machinist carries to the foreman of a shop needing a man of his qualifications. If a union man desires to learn an advanced and more skilled trade, or branch of the trade he is then following, his national union will provide him with a correspondence course and endeavor to place him to advantage when he has completed the course.

If the union man is sick, his union will attend him; if he needs help, the union will help him; when he grows old, the union provides him a home; and when he dies the union will bury him. To the working man the union is school, church, society, bank, guide and protector.¹ Members are in constant touch, working on the same job, holding group meetings at frequent intervals, and turning out to the monthly central meetings in great numbers when anything of importance is expected to transpire. In many highly organized trades to-day it is, of course, impossible to work without a union card.

Here is a great lesson to be studied by any organization that hopes to retain its membership. The national and state organizations may be important, but it is the vitality or lack of vitality of the small local membership groups that in the end determines whether or not the membership will grow in numbers and the organization increase in strength. Every effort must be made to make

¹ Not all unions perform all these functions. The plans vary.

the local work personal and practical and worth while. The Knights of Labor tried to maintain an organization on broad, national, idealistic principles, but it didn't work. Membership rolled in for a time—in 1886 the Knights of Labor had more than 600,000 members—but soon the local members found no particular reason to attend local meetings, lost interest, failed to pay their dues, and the organization speedily went to pieces.

Because of the physical limitations—long distances, scattered neighbors, and infrequent meetings—farmers' organizations labor under a peculiar handicap in the matter of maintaining active local interest. The average farmer attends a central or local meeting and then drives off miles to himself, perhaps not talking to another member about organization affairs until the next meeting a full month later.

But this simply means that extraordinary effort must be made to provide the means for local activity and the close, personal, ever apparent incentive for loyalty to the organization. Improved transportation is doing much to eliminate distance and most farmers to-day have somewhat more time to give to such matters than formerly.

The history of trade unionism discloses many significant lessons of value to the farmer leader interested in organization affairs.

Modern trade unionism made a start in the United States somewhat earlier than did organization among farmers. The underlying reasons for the starting of the movement were much the same, however, in the two groups; namely, the changing conditions incident to the establishing of industrial centers and the breaking up of the people into more definitely defined classes based on occupation.

Trade unionism as an industrial and political force appeared about 1825.¹ In Philadelphia and New York strong organizations were maintained for a time. Most of these organizations, however, were very loosely constituted and were ordinarily short-lived. Probably because of lack of definite and thorough organization which would permit of other types of activity, the leaders attempted to exercise power through political means. They counted upon such organizations as existed to rally to the labor standard at election time. Whatever the motive and circumstances, the fact is recorded that the first workingmen's party appeared in Philadelphia about 1828, and a more important political movement in New York in 1829. The New York party was organized in the spring of 1829, elected a state assemblyman in the fall, was split into three factions within a few months, put three tickets in the field in the fall of 1830, and disappeared from view the following spring. The same fate seems to have befallen this early political movement of the labor forces in other cities but its brief show of strength was not without effect. Tammany politicians were thoroughly frightened and incorporated several of the principal planks of the workingmen's party in their own platform.²

The fate of this first workingmen's party was accepted as a lesson in labor organization circles and when another strong trade-union movement arose in 1833-37 the leaders steered clear of partisan politics. The plan was adopted of questioning candidates as to their position on questions of interest to labor. This new labor movement grew out of the troubles arising from the

¹"The History and Problems of Organized Labor," F. T. Carlton.

²The Workingmen's Party of New York, by Carlton, *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 22, 415.

rapid inflation of prices in Andrew Jackson's régime. Prices went up tremendously but wages lagged behind. The laboring man saw no relief except through organization and strikes. The question of hours was also a bone of contention and it was following the strikes and agitation of 1835 that the ten-hour day gained its first foothold.

The pioneer national organization of wage earners in the United States was known as the National Trades' Union. The first convention of this organization was held in New York in 1834. This organization held annual conventions for several years but had little authority over the local units.

With the coming of the panic of 1837 the weaknesses of the existing loosely bound organization showed up and the national organization soon disappeared and was all but forgotten.

For more than a decade following 1837 very little in the way of labor organization existed. A few local trades continued their nominal organizations but no national or state organizations were maintained and no program of work actively prosecuted. Beginning about 1845 a rather extraordinary period of harmony and submersion of class consciousness set in. Fostered by such men as Greeley, Dana, and Brisbane—not themselves of the wage earning class—the doctrines of humanitarianism were constantly preached. Instead of organizing to conduct strikes for higher wages many organizations of workmen came into being to labor for the broader economic and social principles which would advance the general level of society. A free school system and free homesteads on the western lands were two of the most prominent results of this agitation. Incidentally this repre-

sented the first serious attempt to bring all laboring men together into a single organization without regard to trade.

The possibility of securing free lands, the attainment of a number of important political and economic concessions for which they were fighting, and the overshadowing importance of the slavery question, were the more important factors which prevented definite and strong labor organization preceding the outbreak of the Civil War.

Carlton calls the Civil War period the epoch of the "second American industrial revolution." The demand for goods was unprecedented. Large scale production made its appearance and due to the lack of available workers machinery was substituted as never before. The sewing machine, the reaper, boot and shoe machinery and the telegraph were all invented immediately preceding the Civil War. These innovations were eagerly seized upon and put to full use as quickly as possible after the outbreak of hostilities.

With the exception of the first year the Civil War period was one of prosperity at the North. Profits were large and many industries, particularly manufactures, experienced phenomenal growth. Associations of manufacturers were formed, first to facilitate coöperation in maximum production, later, for protective purposes, and finally to resist the demands of labor.

With industrial consolidation an accomplished fact, or at least a prospective fact, labor again took up the idea of organization and pushed it vigorously. Workers found themselves helpless, for a time, against the associations of employers. The return of the soldiers made new problems and new organization needs and by 1866 labor was again fairly well organized in the larger cities. The idea

of consolidation into one large national body again gained supporters and whereas a similar attempt had failed in 1864, two years later a National Labor Congress was held in Baltimore and the National Labor Union effected. This was a weak federation of local, state and national organizations. The dues were low and the entire organization was apparently only a sort of continuing committee between annual conventions. Its chief object was to influence legislation and when one of its most important measures—an eight-hour law applying to laborers and mechanics employed by the Government—was passed by Congress in 1868, it fell apart and speedily died.

A number of socialistic schemes gained some ground among laboring classes about this time and considerable progress was also made along coöperative lines but nothing was done in a national way and the panic of 1873 forced many of the remaining locals to disband.

THE KNIGHTS OF LABOR

In the middle 70's another group arose which endeavored once again to unite all laboring men in a single organization without distinction as to trades. This organization was known as the Knights of Labor.

By 1885 the Knights of Labor ¹ had a membership of more than 100,000, then suddenly it experienced a phenomenal growth and by the end of 1886 numbered more than 600,000 members. This was an organization entirely independent of trade unions. Its government was highly centralized and at times autocratic. The aim was to bring about the betterment of the working classes through

¹ "History and Problems of Organized Labor," Carlton.



John W. Coverdale, First Secretary of American Farm Bureau Federation.



Gray Silver, First Washington Representative of the American Farm Bureau Federation.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
ASTOR, LENOX
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

political action and coöperation rather than through strikes, boycotts and other means of direct action customary among trade unions. They demanded the establishment of a bureau of labor statistics, the use of the referendum, the prohibition of child labor, the levying of graduated income and inheritance taxes, establishment of a postal savings bank system, government ownership of the railways and telegraph lines, the introduction of a system of coöperation to supersede the wage system, the use of arbitration to settle labor disputes, and the gradual introduction of the eight-hour day.

This program while excellent in the main, failed to get close enough to the laboring man's problems. He wanted better wages and shorter hours, and he wanted them at once. He had neither the foresight nor the patience to await the ultimate, though slow, realization of the idealistic program set forth. It is not surprising therefore to find him soon going back to his local trade union. The Knights of Labor order fell away rapidly and although still in existence, now consists of little more than sets of officers. The experience of this organization points out an important lesson in organization principles.

THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR.

The American Federation of Labor was founded in 1881. It started as a federation of a number of unions that had originally organized locally and later grown to state and national proportions. Each national union was strictly confined to a given trade. The federation aimed merely to correlate these independent trade groups. A local union of machinists in Chicago, for example, is a

part of the National (or International) Association of Machinists, but it is also an active unit in the Chicago Federation of Labor, and the Illinois Federation of Labor. Each of these three organizations—the national trade union, the city, and the state units of the federation of labor—are a part of and directly connected with the American Federation of Labor. Local unions are affiliated with the Federation only indirectly, through a national union.

This plan of organization has many points of similarity with that used by the Farm Bureau in several states, but certain fundamental features are entirely dissimilar. It will be noted that the local machinist, for instance, joins his machinists' union and by so doing automatically becomes a supporter of the national federation. The local farmer, on the other hand, ordinarily joins the local farm bureau—the direct local representative of the national body. He may also join a livestock shippers' association or a bean growers' association fostered and aided by the Farm Bureau, but this fact in itself gives him no claim upon the national farm bureau organization. An important exception must be noted, however, in the case of Texas and one or two other southern states. In these states a cotton grower upon joining the American Cotton Growers' Association automatically becomes a member of the county, state, and national farm bureaus.

The question of plan of organization has long been one widely discussed in labor organization circles. Many leaders have held that success depends upon the existence of local unions along strict trade lines. It has been argued that only thus can local trade problems be closely watched and sufficient direct aid rendered to maintain financial and numerical strength and interest. The failure

of all early attempts to organize as one big group, or even along "industrial" lines instead of "trade" lines, is pointed to as strong argument against any change in the present plan of organization. Yet the organization is admittedly cumbersome and unwieldy because of its peculiar structure.

The use of the strike as a weapon makes a very definite reason why all men in a given trade should be affiliated in a separate and distinct body. But this in itself would not appear to be sufficient reason why such a group should not be subordinate to the group which represents the overhead welfare of all kinds and classes of labor. It seems likely that the existence of strong national trade unions before the formation of any central coördinating body is the chief reason why the type of organization in use has persisted. The officers of these national unions have been unwilling to surrender any portion of their prestige that might suffer through any contemplated reorganization designed to place greater powers in the hands of the central federation.

In recent years there has been a decided movement toward consolidation of unions along industry rather than trade lines. This has been partly due to the greater use of machinery and the shifting of duties due to greater specialization, but is also a result of the need for larger numbers to take part in making a strike more effective. With the greater dependence upon legislative remedies and regulations by governmental boards and commissions more and more strength has been acquired by the central federation headquarters. Students of the labor movement feel that this tendency toward centralization of power will continue.

Based on the experience of the American Federation

of Labor, some might argue that farmers should organize along strict commodity lines and then federate these groups; that is, the grain growers, the livestock men, the fruit producers, and the dairymen, in some plan of central representative union.

A fundamental difference between the conditions in the two instances is apparent, however, in the fact that the farmer is seldom exclusively interested in one line of production. And, furthermore, his major interest in any particular line of production, as far as organized effort is concerned, is in getting a better market price. This in itself necessitates a separate commodity organization. These are becoming quite numerous. But the farmer's interests outside of the selling of one or more commodities are so many and so varied (in contrast with the laboring man's rather limited range of interests) that it would seem to be impossible to secure any unity or strength of action by depending upon a central association of these various commodity organizations. The recent tendency of labor organizations to centralize power indicates a realization of their own weakness in plan of organization for dealing with national affairs. It should be remembered, too, that a central labor organization has certain coercive control over the locals, that a farmers' organization would not have. The strike funds of the locals are deposited with and are under the control of the national union.

The chief advantage that can be justly claimed for the local organization along "trade" lines rather than simply broad "labor" lines is that by being in closer contact with the workman's daily trade troubles, right in the shop, greater interest can be maintained in the organization, and quicker results secured when corrective action

must be taken. It will be seen that under the physical conditions of the farm—particularly the isolation of individuals, much of the benefit that the laborer gets from this close type of organization would be lost to the farmer. Commodity organizations within the Farm Bureau—either under the direction of farm bureau committees or definitely associated with the county or state farm bureau organization—would seem to retain most of the advantages of commodity organizations, in so far as marketing of products is concerned, and at the same time provide through the overhead farm bureau organization a much more flexible and powerful instrument for handling the broader problems than would be afforded through a necessarily loosely organized central association of commodity organizations.

But the importance of maintaining active local interest is paramount. The necessity for this has sometimes led labor unions into unwise actions which have discredited them in the minds of many fair-minded citizens. It is charged, for instance, that the local walking delegates frequently stir up trouble on technicalities, merely to justify their existence and keep up interest in the organization.

There would seem to be no excuse for tactics of this kind in any organization, either labor or agricultural. The opportunities for really constructive work are so numerous that there should be no occasion to resort to demagoguery. Any temporary tactical advantage gained is more than outweighed by the reaction that results when the principles advocated are eventually proven unsound.

But it takes work—good, hard, mental, physical, and nervous energy to do active, constructive work in a way to maintain organization interest. And this is no less

true of the community and county fields than of the state and national fields. Because this is true the temptation is always present to secure interest and support through that easy but illusory substitute for work—demagoguery.

Recent writers and speakers have stated that the American Federation of Labor has decided to put less reliance in legislation as a means of advancing labor's interests. Labor leaders, for instance, assert that, contrary to popular belief, they did not advocate the passage of the Adamson Act which made the eight-hour day the basis of pay on the railroads. What they did do, they claim, was to threaten to tie up all transportation unless the eight-hour day was made the basis of pay. They preferred to make this arrangement with the railway managers independent of any legislative action.

This attitude has come about through unpleasant experiences where court decisions and technicalities have rendered supposedly beneficial legislation inoperative or ineffective. If the bargain is made with the employers the union can use direct methods to see that its terms are enforced.

This does not mean, however, that the Federation of Labor contemplates paying any less attention to legislative matters. On the contrary their plans call for strengthened organization for efforts along this line. They are planning to scan even more carefully every bill that is presented. Their change in attitude simply recognizes the principle that many of their problems demand solution along economic lines rather than along legislative lines—a principle already well established in Farm Bureau circles.

One other feature of labor organization evolution should be referred to as indicative of a changing attitude.

This is the growing tendency to accumulate and invest funds in substantial property. Labor banks are being established. The Mt. Vernon Savings Bank, of Washington, is said to be the first bank of this kind to be opened. It began business on May 20, 1920, and by December 29th had deposits totaling \$1,262,040.

A similar but larger bank has been opened in Cleveland by the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, and a Telegraphers' Coöperative National Bank is projected for location in St. Louis in the near future.

A contemporary writer says: "Recent failures to accomplish its ends by industrial or political means have turned the efforts of organized labor toward finance. Only by substantial control of their own funds through their own banking institutions, many union leaders are convinced, will the workers be able to make their will effective. The possibility of taking part in the financing of industry is regarded as a means of influencing its policies."

An interesting phase of this development is the possibility of a change of viewpoint toward the question of wages and hours, and the various restrictive regulations, when the labor union itself owns an interest in the factory. When the laboring man becomes both owner and workman he will more nearly approach the position of the farmer.

PART V

THE FARM BUREAU AS A FORCE IN NATIONAL AFFAIRS

CHAPTER XX

INFLUENCE UPON BUSINESS

IT is never safe to forecast the trend of social developments, nor of economic developments when closely associated with social developments. Since there has probably never been a time in American history when the tendency toward regulation of business in the interest of the greater social development has been more pronounced than at the present time, prophecy is particularly hazardous just now.

The period of pure money-making and exploitation without regard to the best interests of society as a whole seems to be approaching an end. Great numbers of businesses to-day are apparently making every effort to perform the greatest possible amount of service to the general public at the least possible cost, despite the fact that we still have with us the example of numerous monopolies that operate on the principle of extracting all that the traffic will bear.

Manufacturing has been systematized and improved to a point that is little short of marvelous in its efficiency.

No one can watch a Ford plant turning out completed cars at the rate of several a minute, or a packing plant converting hogs into hams and pork chops and buttons, without feeling that the manufacturer is doing about all that we can reasonably expect at this period of our scientific development, in the matter of efficiently turning raw materials into finished products.

But it is on the distribution end that most of us are weak. It is the regular thing in perhaps the majority of manufactured lines to add one hundred to two hundred percent between the factory costs and the price to the final consumer. This is not profit. Of course it includes several profits, but most of it is selling costs. This doubling of price to the consumer usually represents the cost first, of convincing the consumer that he needs the article in question and, second, of placing it before him in the amount and shape and at the time he desires it.

In the case of a new article—one to which the public must be educated concerning its advantages—high selling costs are justifiable. The consumer must be willing to pay for his education. But in the case of staples whose uses are well known and thoroughly understood by the consumer, there is no excuse for the high selling costs existing in common practice. These selling costs represent largely the *costs of duplication*, of keeping ten brands of soap on the market where five would, perhaps, serve all useful purposes; of maintaining six grocery stores side by side, where three could handle all the business; of having eleven milk wagons cover the same block where one could deliver all the milk desired in that block; of sending out three salesmen to call on the same customers and taking the orders that could be just as readily collected by one. In other words, *the consumer must still*

pay the costs of being sold an article even though he has bought that article for years, knows all about it, and expects to place his order when he needs it.

It is this cost that coöperative buying eliminates. Certain additional costs may be eliminated depending upon how much or how little of the local work in connection with handling the order the coöperator is willing to do for himself. These latter savings are, however, mere payments for work performed and may frequently be done cheaper by the local dealer or agent. As pointed out in Chapter IV coöperative buying has never developed in this country to the extent that it has in England and countries of continental Europe, but it is making rapid progress among agricultural groups to-day. Coöperative buying frequently follows, rather than precedes, coöperative selling in this country. A coöperative elevator once organized to sell grain for the farmer-owners finds that it has the facilities at hand to handle fertilizers, seeds, mixed feeds, salt, fence posts, lumber, wire fence, nails, gasoline, automobile tires, and other staple farm supplies. The big growth expected in coöperative elevators and the recent big growth in livestock shipping associations will undoubtedly rapidly increase the volume and, perhaps, variety of goods thus handled coöperatively.

As indicated in Chapter XI many county farm bureaus now have business agents whose duty it is to arrange for the coöperative purchase of a great variety of articles, usually utilizing the services of a local dealer on a basis of reduced remuneration for services actually performed. There seems every reason to believe that this development will spread as the farm bureaus become stronger.

It is in the sale and distribution of farm products, however, where certain lines of business will be most radically affected. While the announced plans of the U. S. Grain

Growers, Inc. (Chapter XII) do not at present include the milling of flour, any failure on the part of large milling interests to cooperate in getting flour to the consumer at the least possible manufacturing and selling costs, will almost certainly be followed by the entering of the co-operatives upon the milling field. It has been suggested that livestock producers should prepare meat for sale. With the present highly efficient meat packing system and adequate regulation such as that aimed at in recent Federal legislation, it is doubtful if any considerable effort will be made by the producers to enter that particular field. Failure of Federal regulation to correct existing abuses would almost certainly be followed by cooperative attempts in meat packing, provided, of course, that at that time farm organizations and the tendency toward cooperative efforts were as strong as at the present time.

As suggested in the case of meat packing and milling, the extent to which an unchecked development of the Farm Bureau would lead to cooperative fertilizer plants, binder twine factories, farm machinery factories, and similar activities, will probably depend largely upon the spirit and degree of cooperation shown by the private interests now engaged in these fields of endeavor. Already the fertilizer interests in some sections have shown a notable lack of cooperation and several states are considering the purchase or erection of plants. In Indiana in the spring of 1921, a state-wide boycott of fertilizers at the reigning high prices speedily brought overtures and heavy cuts in price from the manufacturers.

With the production and wholesale distribution of farm products well in hand it might be thought that the farmers' interest in his products should cease. It might be argued that the farmer is not interested in what the consumer must pay for the product. But this is a false

assumption. If the consumer must pay an exorbitant price for meats he will cut down on meat consumption, just as he did during the war period and still persists in doing. If fruits and the other fancier articles are over-priced the consumer must of necessity pass these by and purchase the more substantial articles of diet. And if the general price level of farm products is too high when they get to the consumer, total consumption will be cut down, just as it was in Europe following the war.

So the farmer has nothing to gain and much to lose if the retailer adds on 50 to 100 percent after the products have been delivered to the city, as is ordinarily the case with fruits, vegetables, and frequently with meats.

The next logical step would be for coöperative buying units of consumers to be organized to meet and deal with the coöperative selling units of the farmers. Some progress has already been made along this line in special cases, although not with marked success. The American Federation of Labor is, however, taking up this problem and it is not at all unlikely that we may soon find the workmen of a given factory or store purchasing their supplies through coöperative agents or stores. The recent advent of the self-service chain stores has been a step in the right direction, but of course the aim of these privately owned institutions will be, not to place foods in the hands of the people at the least possible cost, but to distribute at prices just sufficiently lower than those of old-type stores to attract trade.

Perhaps the most notable tendency of the times is to force the large monopolies or close associations of a monopolistic nature, to submit to Federal regulation sufficiently drastic to make abuses impossible, but not so inelastic as to materially reduce their undoubted efficiency.

In other words, society is insisting that the advantages of monopoly, or virtual monopoly, be divided with the consumer. This type of legislation has a long distance to go yet to make it really effective but it has great possibilities. The Sherman Anti-Trust law has proven totally unable to prevent monopolistic conditions; the next effort is to be made apparently along the lines of control and limitation of private profits.

The American farmer properly organized should prove a strong ally in this movement. Organized labor is also firmly committed to this policy. The Consumers' League naturally favors the plan. Together, these combined memberships can pass any measure that has a fair degree of support from what we call "public opinion."

Assuming the continued strength and growth of the organized groups mentioned, it does not appear at all extravagant to assert that the average American business man will have to learn to operate on less and less margins between original cost and final selling price. This means a higher degree of efficiency, probably involving reconstructed selling and distribution methods.

There is no disposition on the part of the farmer, at least, to take over any line of business unless he feels that it is fundamentally inefficient in its present form. He is willing to pay well for useful services performed, but he balks at paying for a series of useless operations. The farmer is glad to see Henry Ford, for instance, make money. He does not begrudge him the profit made on each car produced. He knows it cannot be more than fair pay for the service performed, for he has noted that whenever because of improved methods the profit becomes too high, it is divided with the consumer in the form of reduced prices.

CHAPTER XXI

INFLUENCE UPON LEGISLATION AND GOVERNMENT

THAT an agricultural body strongly organized can have a profound influence upon legislation and government, both state and national, has already become plainly apparent. Certain manifestations of the effects of this influence were noted in Chapter XIV, and also in Chapter XX. The extent to which this tendency is likely to develop depends upon the strength and unity of the organization, the skill with which it is managed and the temper of the people—all highly uncertain factors.

At the beginning of the uprising against Louis XVI the French people had no thought of a real revolution. They sought merely to impress the king and his foolish wife, Marie Antoinette, with the seriousness of the economic situation then confronting the common people, and pledged love and loyalty if the royal pair would but correct their personal faults. Failing in this, passion finally took command, swept everything before it, and royalty paid the penalty.

Few really thought in 1860 that the North and the South could actually come to civil war. As Colonel Henry Watterson says,¹ "All of them (the more radical leaders in Congress, both northern and southern) were playing a game. If sectional war, which was incessantly threatened

¹ "Marse Henry"—An Autobiography, by Henry Watterson.

by the two extremes, had been keenly realized and seriously considered, it might have been averted. Very few believed that it would come to actual war." But while politicians played their game the leaders got themselves so tangled up in partisan maneuvering that war was the only logical outlet from the position in which they found themselves.

Thus are nations and groups frequently swept into positions which they originally had no intention of occupying.

It seems impossible that the grip which the large financial and commercial interests have held on Congress virtually since the close of the Civil War can continue much longer. The signs of a breaking away are plainly evident in Congress. The progressive Republicans and the progressive Democrats are getting together and holding conferences. The agricultural "blocs" (see Chapter XIV) in both the Senate and the House contain both Democrats and Republicans and are intent upon placing the interests of their constituents above those of "Big Business" regardless of parties, party leaders or steering committees. Unless economic conditions show a decided improvement in the early future a new third party is a possibility not at all remote. The formation of these agricultural "blocs" has in the earlier stages had an excellent effect in hastening agricultural legislation. Soon, however, their existence is likely to solidify the opposition. This, in turn, necessitates more vigorous demands on the part of the "bloc," a sharper division between the progressives and the reactionaries—and the basis for a lasting split is laid.

The very existence of these agricultural "blocs" depends, however, upon the existence of a strong, active, vigorous farm organization capable of reëlecting its cham-

pions despite the almost certain opposition of the interests backing the reactionary elements. No member of Congress who cares anything at all about reelection would dare take such a decided step unless he felt assured that he would have the full backing of an active and aggressive agricultural organization in his home district. It would appear therefore that the development of the progressive movement in Congress depends to a very considerable extent upon the strength developed and the policies adopted by the Farm Bureau Federation.

Organized labor is, of course, another big element in the situation. Any progressive movement either within the parties or as a separate third party must count on the support of organized labor for a considerable share of its strength. Organized labor has been making overtures to agriculture for some years. This effort is much more noticeable to-day. These two groups solidly united could carry practically any national election, including a big majority of the Congressmen. Much interest attaches, therefore, to the possibility of such a coalition.

While as already stated accurate forecasting of social movements is impossible, yet it does not seem likely that any such formal arrangement could be consummated in the near future. Sentiment in agricultural circles is decidedly against it now. The farmer was not pleased with the way labor acted during the war. It will take some time to forget how labor loaded up the railways with the burdensome and expensive "national agreements" which were one of the big causes of the excessive transportation costs the farmer had to pay. The farmer's resentment against labor is, however, very materially tempered by his recollection of how the railways grabbed everything in sight when they had the upper hand some years ago.

So the farmer occupies essentially neutral ground. He can and does coöperate with organized labor in securing legislation to regulate the packers and control monopolies, yet he will join just as cheerfully with "capital" in curbing what he conceives to be excesses committed in the name of organized labor. The farmer's interests are frequently identical with those of the laboring man, though not always. Labor wants low-priced food, cheap imports and high wages; the farmer wants high-priced foods, protection against cheap foreign foods and moderate wages. But a better understanding of each other's problems is disclosing that these demands are not so diametrically opposed as they may at first seem. The farmer realizes that if labor is underpaid it cannot buy his food products except at lower prices; and the laboring man is beginning to discover that if his rate of compensation is too high the farmer—his best customer—must simply refrain from buying until prices are lower. The laboring man who has been granted protection for years against the cheap labor of foreign countries finds it rather inconsistent to refuse equivalent protection to the farmer when the latter needs it.

There is every reason to believe that the farmers, who individually have long been considered the backbone of our national institution, may when properly organized and wisely led, become the economic balance wheel of the nation. The farmer's unique position fits him well to play this rôle. Being a capitalist and a jealous advocate of the rights of private property, he is not likely to tend to the common ownership ideas of socialism. Being both a laborer and an employer of labor he is likely to take a sane attitude on the question of the share of the workman in the proceeds of his labor. Being something of an

entrepreneur and at the same time having suffered extensively through the exploitations of the larger financial and commercial interests he is likely to take a well balanced position on questions of business rights and privileges and restrictions of same.

Some there are who profess to see grave dangers in the possibility of farmers as an organized group running the government. Only a very few of the larger newspapers have sensed the viewpoint that even should such a situation come to pass it might not be wholly undesirable. The following editorial from the *Washington Herald* (largely owned by Herbert Hoover) for June 7th catches the thought well:

"LEGISLATING FOR THE WHOLE PEOPLE

* * * * *

"Ever since the heyday of Mr. Bryan's 'cross of gold,' there has been a like fear from very much a like source, that some class would run the government and dictate legislation for its own advantage. In Mr. Bryan's time, it was charged that the financial powers, known then, as now, as 'Wall Street,' was such a class. Again it has been the manufacturers dictating tariff laws, or the railroads getting restrictive legislation to their liking, and later labor with its exemptions from control and its Adamson laws.

"Just now it is the farmers who are striking terror to the souls of all these other innocents. The truth is that this present fear is largely born of the 'some one else'; the farmers are not our class. As a fact the farmers do not form a class. The farm is an industry, each farm is an individual factory. It is a plant with an output largely of raw materials. Each one is owned by the man who

runs it, and he is both an employer and a capitalist. Or it is rented by a manager who is also a capitalist. In either case the farmer is usually a laborer as well as manager and capitalist. He is also a shipper and merchant, a producer and consumer.

"Farmers include all classes. They have sympathetic ties with all classes. . . .

"When organizations of manufacturers, and all they represent, sent out warnings against the farmers as a would-be 'privileged class,' that this is 'a country of laws—tariff laws—and not of men,' that special or class legislation is dangerous to the class itself and that Congress must represent 'the whole American people,' it has a strain of unconscious humor. It is difficult to recall a time when these same men were not asking Congress for legislation for their special benefit, though of course for 'the whole American people' whose prosperity was wrapped up in their prosperity.

"Agriculture is the basic industry upon which all other industries are based. It provides the cotton and the wool, the meats for the packers, the grain for the mills, the feed for animals and the food for the folks. Going and coming it provides the bulk of transportation. Farm output has been the chief factor in foreign trade and for settling our debts abroad. Farmers are the buyers of a larger percentage of American manufactures than any other 'class' and nearly equal all the rest combined.

"If there is any legislation which is national, it is that which is agrarian in its immediate objective. If it is possible to have any legislation for 'the whole American people' without special reference, or special aid, or special benefit to any, it is that which promotes agriculture and agricultural conditions."

Undoubtedly the opportunity for a great civic service exists. Farm organizations have it within their power

to leave an impress upon the laws of the land that will forever dethrone special privilege and elevate the idea of legislative enactment for the good of *all* the people. This possibility is already known to the leaders of the farm bureau movement. Much progress has been made in working toward that ultimate end. Beyond this it is impossible to accurately forecast. Everything depends upon management and the intelligent coöperation of the membership, which in turn depends largely upon education to a full understanding of the situation and the objects to be accomplished.

CHAPTER XXII

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

THE question universally asked is, "Will the Farm Bureau survive?" As has been suggested, no small percentage of business men are calmly ignoring the Farm Bureau's undoubted present prestige and awaiting its failure or subsidence, when they can again proceed with their plans. Rival farm organizations are free with their predictions of an early and material reduction in the Farm Bureau's popularity, strength and influence. The consumers in the cities are looking hopefully forward to the day when the Farm Bureau will be strong enough and deeply enough engaged in coöperative marketing to materially reduce the costs of farm products when delivered at the kitchen door. Incidentally the consumer is keeping an eye open for the possibility of a nationwide farmer-owned monopoly of foods and food products. The politician is anxiously watching every move of the Farm Bureau and endeavoring to make up his mind whether or not this organization will prove strong enough and permanent enough to tie to and to justify him in openly conducting a campaign based on agricultural needs. The membership is loyally supporting the organization as yet, but is awaiting redemption of the oftentimes too rosy promises made by solicitors.

In the meantime the Federation is going forward steadily with its plans. Membership at the time of writ-

ing is increasing at the rate of more than a thousand a day, large funds are available and much active work is in progress. To all outward appearances the American Farm Bureau Federation is solid and sound and has within its grasp the possibility of realization of even its most optimistic hopes.

It would be rash to make an unqualified prediction as to the future of the Farm Bureau Movement. This is particularly true because its success or failure depends to such a large extent upon the management of its officers and this in turn is so much a question of personality. After a critical examination of its organization system and program, both from within and from without, it seems safe to say, however, that all the essentials for a long and successful career are present. From this point forward it is purely a question of management. Whether experienced, level-headed, clear-thinking management along constructive, conservative yet progressive, and above all along business-like lines, can be produced either from within the farming ranks or hired from without, still remains to be seen. It is well to remember that the groundwork and basis for the farm bureau structure was laid after years of experimental effort, not by farmers, but by trained agricultural educators. Farmer leaders have been wonderfully successful in taking this basic organization and reshaping and redirecting it along national reform lines. This is the province in which farmer organizers have ever been successful. The next step is nothing more nor less than the management of a great national business enterprise having at present more than a million stockholders and some six or seven million interested associates to satisfy, and conducting a business spreading throughout the entire United States embodying

merchandising, the building of good-will and a better understanding, and the directing of essential legislation upon which a portion of the returns of the business must be based. Whether or not this kind of managerial ability can be secured and retained has not yet been demonstrated.

One reason why the slower growing farm organizations have usually been the more successful in the end, is because sufficient time is allowed for the development and training of leaders. If the Farm Bureau Federation can hold its membership together loyally for a few years and come out of that period without too many mistakes chalked up to its discredit in the public mind, and without its treasury seriously impaired, it will probably have developed its own statesmen and business managers by that time and can proceed along uniformly safe and sound lines. In the earlier years there is almost certain to be a heavy turn-over in the official personnel, provided an active program is prosecuted. This seems inevitable in any new, active, and rapidly growing organization. Inexperience must of necessity bring its mistakes in viewpoints and in actions and contending factions must be satisfied by compromises. Later a more stable equilibrium is arrived at. The Farm Bureau has done well in this respect so far. No doubt the experience gained in the various state farm bureaus previous to the organization of the National unit has helped.

The above, however, need not imply that the marketing activities of the Farm Bureau cannot go ahead at once and reap success. They, too, apparently have all opportunity for success, depending almost entirely upon management. But the U. S. Grain Growers, for instance, could be successful without the American Farm Bureau Federation being successful in a national way. In fact,

the very present danger exists that unless the Farm Bureau can develop along lines big enough and broad enough so as to make marketing merely one of its numerous important activities, it may eventually turn out that the coöperative concerns that it creates may become so large and powerful within a given territory that they will practically ignore the parent organization. In fact the American Farm Bureau Federation is not even the organic parent under the plan of organization whereby the commodity coöperative organizations are now being brought into existence. Since each commodity organization can be but sectional, there would still be great need for some overhead organization national in scope and capable of speaking for *all* the farmers, even should a complete network of commodity organizations come into existence. It will require the utmost skill of management for the Farm Bureau to establish itself so firmly in this position of leadership now that it cannot be displaced by some association of commodity organizations later. Such an association of the various sectional commodity organizations could never serve the farmer as effectively, by far, as could the American Farm Bureau Federation when properly functioning, but it might be successfully established and maintained, nevertheless, because of the greater relative importance the managers of the various commodity groups might see in it for themselves.

When we turn to the history of the organizations that have gone before, in an attempt to read the probable future of the Farm Bureau, we find a great deal that is encouraging. The solid basis of local, county units centering around a paid county agent gives a foundation never before enjoyed by any farm organization and avoids the looseness of organization that has proved a weak point

in every other great national farmers' movement that has developed. There are those who insist that the Farm Bureau will eventually have to be divorced from this connection with the local farm bureau, but the author does not share in that view. We have endeavored to show in Chapter XVI why it seems desirable to the people as a whole that this relationship continue and entirely likely that it will do so, although modifications of the arrangement will no doubt be necessary.

The Farm Bureau has very wisely avoided another stumbling block which has crippled most national farm organizations and rendered them ineffective just at a time when they should have been in position to demonstrate their value to their membership. The Farm Bureau has provided itself with adequate funds. It is prepared to do business on a business basis. True, this involves a heavier obligation to its membership, but it is impossible to make a showing without funds, and it is a mistaken theory that assumes that a farmer member will expect only one-tenth as much in the way of results from a one dollar membership fee as from a ten dollar fee.

The Farm Bureau may in the near future, if present political tendencies materialize, have the same temptation that came to the Grange and the Farmers' Alliance, to take an active part in politics. The Grange successfully withstood this temptation with but moderate defections from its ranks. The Alliance was swept into the political whirlpool and completely lost. The Farm Bureau has had the way shown it by the Non-Partisan League, in case it becomes necessary to endeavor to bring about reforms through combination at the polls. It should profit by the examples of its predecessors.

The handling of coöperative commercial activities

which has wrought the wreck of so many farm organizations seems to be on a better basis in the case of the Farm Bureau. The experience that has been learned so painfully during the past twenty years has been utilized and the chances of failure of coöperative enterprises organized on modern lines is much less than formerly. Then, too, the Farm Bureau has set up a safeguard which would tend to protect it even in case any of the coöperative activities fostered by the Bureau should go wrong. Instead of being conducted directly by the farm bureau organization, either national or state, separate incorporated bodies are utilized. But there is no use trying to dodge the fact, of course, that a failure of any of the more important coöperative marketing undertakings would seriously reflect to the injury of the Farm Bureau, even though not necessarily causing its downfall. It is probably in connection with grain marketing activities that the strongest attack upon the entire farm bureau movement will be made by those who fear its power, particularly if it happens to curtail private profits.

Already such attacks have been launched. The attack will probably be made both through the membership and through the general public. To the latter it will be assiduously claimed that the producers are forming a monopoly to force up the prices of food to the consumer. Among the former the spreading of the seeds of distrust, disloyalty and dissensions is the usual plan of procedure followed by the enemies of coöperation.

It is therefore particularly important that the Farm Bureau, no less than the membership of the Grain Growers' organization, insist that the affairs of the grain marketing organizations be conducted with the utmost wisdom and caution. Some have undoubtedly gone into

these projects with the thought that very large savings can be effected through coöperative grain marketing, and there is danger of disappointment and dissatisfaction with what may well be considered excellent results secured by an organization handling a product so staple and on which margins normally are relatively small.

The local dealer, and the manufacturer who supplies him with his stock in trade, are counting on breaking up the local coöperative buying units by being in position to extend credit to purchasers, who one by one find themselves in need of feeds, fertilizer, and other supplies and without the cash with which to order coöperatively. To combat this tendency it is important to improve rural credit facilities along the lines recently proposed in financing measures urged by farm organizations before Congress.

If references to the possibilities of failure seem to the reader to be too constantly recurring in these pages, let his impatience be tempered by the recollection of the astounding ease with which former great agricultural organizations have gone to pieces when apparently at the very crest of popularity. It is rather generally conceded that a collapse of the farm bureau movement would set Agriculture back in this country a half century. It is considerations of this kind that make it so highly important that both officers and members be thoroughly charged with the importance of the economic and social development they are undertaking.

Through broader education and wider reading the farmer of to-day is better informed on current events and economic tendencies and there is less likelihood of trouble from radicalism and unsound theories than formerly. In general the farmer has a better income and

more time for reflection and for participation in organization activities than he had in the 90's. This ought to work out to the advantage of the organization.

The advantages of the Farm Bureau over any previous farm organization are many and real, but there are difficulties which all farm organizations have had to struggle with and which exist to-day almost as prominently as ever. These are simply manifestations of human nature and so cannot well be eliminated. Chief among these are personal ambitions, jealousy, and the willingness to use the organization for the furtherance of some personal plan or scheme. These, together with honest differences of opinion, particularly between sections, ordinarily soon lead to factionalism and strife. It is useless to rail against this situation. It exists in practically every worth-while organization. As already suggested, the best that can be done is to guard against the ill effects and the cessation of labors that usually accompany it.

Inaction is after all, perhaps, the most deadly of the ills that beset farmers' organizations. An organization must be kept working in order to be healthy and this applies to the local units as forcefully as to the national organization. History of the earlier organizations shows that nothing will pull together the contending factions, invigorate the local units, and swell the membership and influence of an organization quite so well apparently as a big, broad program of work vigorously prosecuted in such a way that every officer and every member may feel that he has a part to perform.

The Farm Bureau has it within its grasp to become the most powerful single influence in the United States. Its ideals put into practical effect should go far toward improving the social and material status not only of every

farmer and every artisan depending upon the farm, but of every consumer as well.

It contemplates nothing socialistic, not even anything revolutionary. It hopes merely to apply to the various phases of agriculture as an industry, the ordinary principles of good business and good government and asks only that existing restrictions be removed so that free opportunity is given for the realization of these aims. The farmer has no desire to perform merchandising, manufacturing or other services now efficiently performed by existing agencies and he will show the kindest of spirit toward and interest in any existing agency which exhibits an honest desire to modify its methods to bring about a degree of efficiency more nearly in accord with the new standard of service which the farmer himself expects to set. But he will have scant patience with any agency which persists in setting up barriers and interposing obstructions which interfere with the realization of his ideal—the greatest service at the least possible cost consistent with legitimate returns for effort and capital actually expended.

**PRESIDENTS AND SECRETARIES OF STATE
FARM BUREAUS**

(August 1, 1921.)

| <i>State</i> | <i>President</i> | <i>Secretary</i> |
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| Alabama | C. W. Rittenour, Montgomery, Ala. | |
| Arkansas | H. T. Brown, Little Rock, Ark. | Harry F. Kapp, Little Rock, Ark. |
| Arizona | Charles S. Brown, Tucson, Arizona. | W. C. Schneider, Tucson, Arizona. |
| California | W. H. Walker, Willows, California. | W. H. Heileman, Berkeley, California. |
| Colorado | J. M. Rodgers, Willington, Colorado | F. R. Lamb (Tem.), Penrose, Colorado. |
| Connecticut | W. C. Wood, New Canaan, Conn. | Stancliff Hale, South Glastonbury, Conn. |
| Delaware | W. V. Cosden, Dover, Delaware. | |
| Florida | L. M. Rhodes, Jacksonville, Fla. | Miss Ella Shepard, Pomona, Florida. |
| Georgia | R. A. Kelley, Atlanta, Georgia. | J. G. Oliver, Atlanta, Georgia. |
| Idaho | W. S. Shearer, Lewiston, Idaho. | C. B. Ross, Pocatello, Idaho. |
| Illinois | Howard Leonard, Eureka, Illinois. | D. O. Thompson, Chicago, Ill. |
| Indiana | John G. Brown, Monon, Indiana. | Perry H. Crane, Indianapolis, Ind. |

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| Kansas | Ralph Snyder, Oskaloosa, Kansas. | Chas. R. Weeks, Manhattan, Kansas. |
| Kentucky | E. H. Woods, Louisville, Ky. | Geoffrey Morgan, Louisville, Ky. |
| Maine | Julien Emery, Bar Harbor, Maine. | A. L. Deering, Orono, Maine. |
| Maryland | D. G. Harry, Pykesville, Maryland. | T. B. Symons, College Park, Md. |
| Massachusetts | H. P. Hinckley, Agawam, Mass. | Fred D. Griggs, Waltham, Mass. |
| Michigan | James Nichol, South Haven, Mich. | C. L. Brody, Lansing, Mich. |
| Minnesota | L. E. Potter, Springfield, Minn. | F. L. French, St. Paul, Minn. |
| Missouri | Chester H. Gray, Nevada, Missouri. | E. H. McReynolds, Columbia, Missouri. |
| Montana | W. B. Harland, Como, Montana. | F. S. Cooley, Bozeman, Montana. |
| Nebraska | Elmer Youngs, Lexington, Nebr. | H. D. Lute, Lincoln, Nebr. |
| Nevada | E. C. Riddell, Deeth, Nevada. | John Pohland, Reno, Nevada. |
| New Hampshire | Geo. M. Putnam, Concord, N. H. | |
| New Jersey | H. E. Taylor, Freehold, N. J. | Frank App, Trenton, N. J. |
| New Mexico | Francis E. Lester, Mesilla Park, N. M. | S. G. Cailsch, Montoya, N. M. |
| New York | S. L. Strivings, Castile, N. Y. | E. Victor Underwood, Ithaca, New York. |

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| <i>State</i> | <i>President</i> | <i>Secretary</i> |
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| North Carolina | B. B. Miller, Mt. Ulla, N. C. | |
| North Dakota | Hans Georgeson, Niagara, N. D. | H. B. Fuller, Fargo, N. D. |
| Ohio | O. E. Bradfute, Xenia, Ohio. | Murray D. Lincoln, Columbus, Ohio. |
| Oklahoma | George Bishop, Cordell, Okla. | M. A. Beeson, Stillwater, Okla. |
| Oregon | G. A. Mansfield, Portland, Oregon. | P. O. Powell, Portland, Oregon. |
| Rhode Island | C. N. Potter, Auburn, R. I. | H. W. Tinkham, Warren, R. I. |
| South Dakota | W. S. Hill, Mitchell, South Dak. | M. R. Benedict, Huron, So. Dak. |
| Tennessee | J. F. Porter, Williamsport, Tenn. | |
| Texas | J. T. Orr, Dallas, Texas. | C. O. Moser, Dallas, Texas. |
| Utah | D. D. McKay, Huntsville, Utah. | James M. Kirkham, Salt Lake City, Utah. |
| Vermont | E. B. Cornwall, Middlebury, Vermont | G. M. Hazard, Burlington, Vt. |
| Virginia | Gov. H. C. Stuart, Elk Garden, Va. | E. K. Coyner, Marion, Va. |
| Washington | W. B. Armstrong, Yakima, Wash. | Ivan G. Foster, Yakima, Wash. |
| West Virginia | R. H. Orr, Triadelphia, West Va. | J. B. McLaughlin, Morgantown, W. Va. |
| Wisconsin | Geo. McKerrow, Pewaukee, Wisconsin. | Chris. J. Schroeder, Madison, Wisconsin. |
| Wyoming | Dwight O. Herrick, Laramie, Wyoming. | T. J. Brough, Lyman, Wyoming. |

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